FADE IN:

1 CLOSE ON A CHAMPAGNE BOTTLE 1

TUMBLING end over end through an empty blackness as if in slow motion. Follow the bottle for a few seconds... then suddenly it SMASHES INTO a LARGE METALLIC WALL.

PULL BACK TO REVEAL:

2 EXT. SPACE - STARSHIP IN SPACEDOCK 2

The champagne bottle has just smashed onto the bow of a Federation starship (Excelsior Class) sitting in its dock in orbit around EARTH. FOLLOW the shards of glass from the bottle as they spread over the ship... revealing the name on the hull: USS ENTERPRISE NCC-1701-B.

3 ANGLE ON SPACEDOCK WINDOW 3

A large picture window overlooking the starship in its berth. The window is filled with people in Starfleet uniforms, applauding the christening of the ship (but we hear nothing).

4 ANGLE ON ENTERPRISE-B 4

Emphasizing the large Engineering Hull beneath the saucer section. We see a BLINKING LIGHT from a TURBOLIFT which is traveling along the dorsal of the ship heading forward. MOVE IN on the blinking light...

CUT TO:

5 INT. ENTERPRISE-B - TURBOLIFT 5

Crammed into a very small space are seven very familiar faces: KIRK, SPOCK, BONES, SCOTTY, UHURA, SULU, and CHEKOV. They all look a little uncomfortable at being here -- especially Kirk.

SPOCK
(to Bones)
I haven't felt this close to you in years.

Bones reacts.

KIRK
Trophies.

(CONTINUED)

5 CONTINUED: 5

BONES
What?

KIRK
That's how they think of us. A collection of trophies they bring out and dust off for special occasions...

BONES
Trophies, huh? What do you think our inscriptions would say... "Outstanding Starship Captain"... "Most Noted Doctor"...
(looks at Spock)
"Best... Ears".

Spock shoots him a look. The doors open and they EXIT to...

6 INT. ENTERPRISE-B - BRIDGE - CONTINUOUS 6

Kirk and the others ENTER from the Turbolift and look around with interest. The Bridge is alive with activity. CAPTAIN JOHN HARRIMAN and his BRIDGE CREW are working their consoles. They are all young, eager-looking officers in crisp new uniforms. Harriman turns in his chair to face Kirk and the others. He's confident... conservative... almost arrogant. This is his first command and he takes it very seriously. He stands.

HARRIMAN
Ah, welcome aboard. I'm Captain John Harriman. I see you found your way to the Bridge. I'm sure you're all very tired from your tour. If you'll have a seat, we'll get underway.

Harriman gestures to one side of the Bridge where we can now see there are SEVEN CHAIRS neatly arranged and cordoned off by a red velvet rope.

Kirk and the others react to the sight... they go over and examine the seats with a little dismay. The SCIENCE OFFICER pulls aside one of the ropes and graciously lets them into the area.

(CONTINUED)

6 CONTINUED: 6

SCIENCE OFFICER
I just want you to know how excited we all are to have a group of living legends with us on our maiden voyage.
(beat)
I remember reading about your missions when I was in grade school.

Kirk and the others exchange a look... and then they all sit down heavily -- as if suddenly very tired.

HARRIMAN
(to his crew)
Prepare to leave spacedock. Aft thrusters ahead one quarter, port and starboard at station keeping.
(beat)
Captain Kirk, I'd be honored if you would give the order to get underway.

KIRK
No... no. Thank you.

HARRIMAN
Please, I insist.

Harriman's Bridge crew turns, with eager smiles. Kirk has no choice. He stands uncomfortably... all eyes on him. There is a moment of anticipation.

KIRK
(to all)
Take us out.

The Bridge crew breaks out into APPLAUSE. Kirk sits down in acute embarrassment and annoyance. Bones gives him a look.

BONES
(sotto)
That was very good, Jim.

CUT TO:

7 EXT. SPACE - ENTERPRISE-B 7

The great ship majestically LEAVES the dock and heads out into space, passing DIRECTLY OVERHEAD.

CUT TO:

8 INT. ENTERPRISE-B - BRIDGE 8

A short time later. Harriman's bridge crew is working at their consoles, while Kirk and his crew look noticeably bored -- they have absolutely nothing to do here.

HARRIMAN
Well... we've just cleared the asteroid belt. Our course will take us out beyond Pluto and then back to spacedock... just a quick run around the block.
(beat)
If we have time, we'll conduct a few tests of the warp--

Suddenly the communications console starts to BEEP. The COM OFFICER hits a few commands in response.

COM OFFICER
(to Harriman)
We're picking up a distress call, Captain.

This suddenly grabs Kirk's attention. He stands.

KIRK
On speakers.

The Com Officer works. We hear the voice of a crewmember who sounds panicked and urgent.

COM VOICE
(fritzed)
This is the transport ship Lakul. We're caught in some kind of energy distortion. We can't break free... need immediate help... it's tearing us --

The voice is drowned out by STATIC. The Science Officer checks something on his console.

SCIENCE OFFICER
The Lakul is part of a three ship convoy transporting El-Aurian refugees to Earth.

KIRK
(to Helmsman)
Can you locate them?

(CONTINUED)

8 CONTINUED: 8

HELMSMAN
(works)
Yes, sir. Bearing three one zero mark two one five. Distance: three light years.

HARRIMAN
Are there any other starships in range?

HELMSMAN
No, sir.

Kirk throws the velvet rope out of the way and heads for the Captain's chair.

KIRK
Helm, lay in an intercept course. Kirk to Engineering, stand by to initiate matter/anti-matter infusion sequence in --

HARRIMAN
(hard)
Captain.
(beat)
I'm in command here.

Kirk looks shocked for a moment. But there's no question -- it's Harriman's ship. Harriman returns to the Captain's chair, and Kirk reluctantly goes back to his seat.

HARRIMAN
(continuing, to Helmsman)
Mister Brooks, lay in an intercept course and engage at maximum warp.

9 EXT. SPACE - ENTERPRISE-B 9

The ship GOES INTO WARP.

10 INT. ENTERPRISE-B - BRIDGE 10

A few minutes later. The Navigator is working his console.

NAVIGATOR
We're within visual range of the energy distortion, Captain.

(CONTINUED)

10 CONTINUED: 10

HARRIMAN
On screen.

11 INCLUDE VIEWSCREEN 11

Which now shows a HUGE RIBBON OF CRACKLING ENERGY directly ahead of the Enterprise-B. Everyone reacts to the bizarre sight.

BONES
What the hell is that?

SPOCK
Unknown, Doctor.
(he stands)
But, with Commander Kline's permission, I will attempt an analysis.

The Science Officer gets up, deferring to Spock, who then sits and begins working.

NAVIGATOR
I've found the convoy ships.

HARRIMAN
Magnify.

The Viewscreen now MAGNIFIES the image of the ribbon, revealing THREE TRANSPORT SHIPS trapped like insects in the violent torrent of energy. The ships are being buffeted and thrown about by large TENDRILS of CRACKLING ENERGY.

A tense beat. Kirk keeps glancing at Harriman... he's champing at the bit to get in on this.

KIRK
Tractor beam.
(off Harriman's look)
Lock on with your tractor beam and pull them out of there.

HARRIMAN
We don't have a tractor beam.

KIRK
You left spacedock without a tractor beam?

(CONTINUED)

11 CONTINUED: 11

HARRIMAN
(calm)
It won't be installed until Tuesday.

Kirk can't believe it, but before he can say anything else, the Helmsman jumps in with an urgent report.

HELMSMAN
Sir! The starboard vessel's hull is collapsing --

Suddenly the far right ship on the screen is engulfed by a fiery TENDRIL of energy and it EXPLODES. The other two ships continue to be thrown about and buffeted. Everyone reacts with shock on the Bridge.

BONES
How many people were on that ship?

SPOCK
Two hundred sixty-five.

Harriman pales at the sight... seems shell-shocked by the destruction of the ship. Kirk moves quickly and quietly to him.

KIRK
(quiet, urgent)
There are two other ships in there. Move us within transporter range and beam those people off.

HARRIMAN
If we get too close, we might get pulled in...

KIRK
Risk is part of the job if you want to sit in that chair.

Harriman buckles down and grimly looks at the image on the screen.

HARRIMAN
Helm, close to transporter range.

CUT TO:

12 EXT. SPACE - ENTERPRISE-B AND ENERGY RIBBON 12

The Enterprise-B closes in on the huge crackling ribbon.

13 ANGLE ON TRANSPORT SHIPS 13

Which are still trapped in the ribbon. Suddenly the ship on the left is DESTROYED by the massive TENDRILS.

14 INT. ENTERPRISE-B - BRIDGE 14

As before.

HELMSMAN
Port ship has been destroyed.

The lights on the Bridge FLICKER on and off for a moment.

NAVIGATOR
Sir, radiation from the energy distortion is interfering with our warp systems. We'll have to drop to impulse speed.

SCOTTY
(outraged)
What are ye talking about, Lad? Reduce speed in the middle of a rescue? Not on the Enterprise.
(to Kirk)
I still know a few tricks. You'll have your warp power.

Scotty EXITS.

CUT TO:

15 EXT. SPACE - ENTERPRISE-B 15

The ship edges in yet closer to the crackling ribbon. The Tendrils from the ribbon lash out at the ship, just missing it.

16 INT. ENTERPRISE-B - BRIDGE 16

As before.

HELMSMAN
We're within Transporter range.

HARRIMAN
(to Lieutenant)
Beam them directly to Sickbay.
(to Bones)
Doctor McCoy, we may need your help.

(CONTINUED)

16 CONTINUED: 16

BONES
Glad to. How big is your medical staff?

HARRIMAN
The medical staff... doesn't arrive until Tuesday.

Bones reacts with irritation. He turns to Chekov.

BONES
Chekov. You've just become a nurse. Let's go.

Bones and Chekov EXIT to the Turbolift. Kirk is getting frustrated. One by one, his entire crew is getting in on the action... all except him. The Lieutenant is having problems at the aft console.

LIEUTENANT
Sir, I'm having trouble locking onto them. Their life signs appear to be... in temporal flux.

Uhura moves over to help.

UHURA
(sweetly)
Honey, a transporter's just like a man... if you want him to work for you, you gotta boost your gain and modulate his signal.

She helps work the console. Meanwhile, Spock is intrigued by something on his science console.

SPOCK
Fascinating...

Kirk moves to him.

KIRK
What is it?

SPOCK
Their life signs are actually phasing in and out of our spacetime continuum.

KIRK
Phasing? To where?

SPOCK
Unknown. Perhaps a scan of the--

(CONTINUED)

16 CONTINUED: (2) 16

HELMSMAN
Sir! Their hull's collapsing!

17 EXT. SPACE - THE LAKUL 17

The ship is DESTROYED by an energy TENDRIL.

18 INT. ENTERPRISE-B - BRIDGE 18

KIRK
Uhura?

UHURA
We got some of them, sir. Forty-seven...
(beat, then grim)
...out of one hundred fifty.
They're all in Sickbay.

Suddenly, the ship is ROCKED violently. KLAXONS and ALARMS start to wail and the lights FLICKER on and off.

The Helm console EXPLODES, knocking the Helmsman to the floor. Sulu quickly checks on the man -- he's dead. Sulu moves into the empty position and goes to work on the smoking console.

The ship continues to TREMBLE and SHAKE.

KIRK
Report!

SPOCK
We are caught in a gravimetric field emanating from the trailing edge of the ribbon.

HARRIMAN
All engines, full reverse!

19 EXT. SPACE - ENTERPRISE-B & RIBBON 19

The ship is turning <u>sideways</u> into the WAKE of the Ribbon, but cannot break away. It is clearly being pulled along out of control. Tendrils leap up from the ribbon, lashing against the ship.

20 INT. ENTERPRISE-B - SICKBAY 20

The room is filled with the SURVIVORS of the Lakul. They are all members of the EL-AURIAN race -- humanoid and dressed in distinctive clothing. The survivors are in various states of shock. Many sit on the floor, staring into middle distance... some lie on tables, unconscious... others are mumbling incoherently to themselves. Bones and Chekov are moving from person to person with tricorders, trying to get control of the situation, as the ship is ROCKED and FLUNG about.

CHEKOV
(off tricorder)
Only minor injuries so far...

BONES
But they're all suffering from some kind of... neural shock.

Chekov scans a man sitting on a biobed with a dazed look on his face. He has a nasty-looking wound on one side of his face. (We will later learn that this man is named DOCTOR SORAN.) Chekov is about to turn away, when suddenly Soran GRABS him roughly -- clearly a man of great strength -- and pulls him close. Soran's eyes are suddenly wild, crazed.

SORAN
Why... why?

CHEKOV
It's alright. You're safe... you're on the Enterprise.

SORAN
No... I have to... get back... Let me go!

Soran begins to attack Chekov, but before he can do any real damage, Bones injects Soran with a hypospray and Soran falls unconscious.

CHEKOV
What was he talking about?

BONES
I don't know, damnit. I'm a doctor, not a mind reader.

Suddenly, a WOMAN with her back toward us stumbles nearby. Bones quickly grabs her arm and catches her before she falls.

(CONTINUED)

20 CONTINUED: 20

BONES
Easy there...

The woman turns around and we see her face for the first time -- it's GUINAN. She seems dazed and confused. Bones smiles at her warmly.

BONES
(continuing)
It's going to be okay. Here, just lie down.

As he guides Guinan onto a table...

21 INT. ENTERPRISE-B - BRIDGE 21

SULU
Inertial dampers failing.

NAVIGATOR
Engines not responding!

Harriman is gripping the arms of his chair with one hand, and mopping his brow with his handkerchief. His face pales.

HARRIMAN
I didn't expect to die my first day on the job...

Kirk's head snaps around at that defeatist statement.

KIRK
The most important thing you need to learn as Captain is how to cheat death.
(beat)
Spock?

SPOCK
There is no known way to disrupt a gravimetric field of this magnitude.

Kirk looks at him expectantly for a moment.

SPOCK
(continuing)
However, I do have a theory...

KIRK
I thought you might.

(CONTINUED)

21 CONTINUED: 21

SPOCK
An anti-matter discharge directly ahead may disrupt the field long enough for us to break away.

KIRK
A photon torpedo?

SPOCK
Precisely.

KIRK
(quickly, to Sulu)
Load torpedo bays, prepare to fire on my command.

Sulu works for a moment... reacts to the console.

SULU
Captain... we don't have any torpedoes.

Kirk glances at Harriman.

KIRK
Don't tell me... Tuesday.

Harriman nods, a little embarrassed. The SHAKING gets worse.

SPOCK
Captain, it may be possible to <u>simulate</u> a torpedo blast using a resonance burst from the main deflector dish.

KIRK
(onto the idea)
Where are the deflector relays?

SCIENCE OFFICER
Deflector Control is on deck twelve, section twenty-one alpha.

HARRIMAN
(trying to catch up)
Wait a minute... how will that --

KIRK
We'll explain later.

Kirk heads for the Turbolift.

(CONTINUED)

21 CONTINUED: (2) 21

KIRK
(continuing, to Spock)
Keep her together until I get back.

SPOCK
(matter of fact)
I always do.

Kirk smiles as the Turbolift doors slide shut...

22 EXT. SPACE - ENTERPRISE-B & ENERGY RIBBON 22

The ship is still being pulled along.

23 INT. ENTERPRISE-B - CORRIDOR 23

Kirk running down the Corridor, and OPENS a door.

24 INT. ENTERPRISE-B - DEFLECTOR ROOM (CONTINUOUS) 24

A small control room with a few consoles. Kirk rushes in and rips off one of the large wall panels. He quickly begins to re-route cabling and circuitry...

25 INT. ENTERPRISE-B - BRIDGE 25

As before. The ship is SHAKING badly.

SULU
Forty-five seconds to structural collapse!

Spock is completely calm.

SPOCK
Bridge to Captain Kirk.

INTERCUT:

26 INT. ENTERPRISE-B - DEFLECTOR ROOM 26

Kirk working furiously.

KIRK
Kirk, here.

(CONTINUED)

26 CONTINUED: 26

SPOCK
Captain, a certain alacrity in your efforts would be helpful.

KIRK
What happened to that famous Vulcan patience?

SPOCK
It does have its limits.

Kirk finishes work and slams the wall panel closed.

KIRK
That's it. Go!

27 INT. ENTERPRISE-B - BRIDGE 27

As before.

SPOCK
(to Sulu)
Activate main deflector.

Sulu works the console.

28 EXT. SPACE - ENTERPRISE-B 28

A large BURST of ENERGY leaps out of the main deflector dish and EXPLODES in front of the ship. There is an immediate REACTION within the Energy Ribbon, which roils and fluctuates in response.

29 INT. ENTERPRISE-B - BRIDGE 29

As before.

SULU
We're breaking free.

30 EXT. SPACE - ENTERPRISE-B 30

The ship now begins to turn away from the crackling Ribbon. But just as it's turning, one final TENDRIL of energy suddenly leaps out toward the ship.

31 CLOSE ON SAUCER SECTION 31

The tendril of energy SLICES into the leading edge of the saucer section, causing an EXPLOSION.

32 INT. ENTERPRISE-B - BRIDGE 32

The ship is ROCKED so hard that everyone is knocked off their feet. Gradually, the SHAKING STOPS. Sulu scrambles back into position.

SULU
We're clear.

Everyone reacts with relief.

HARRIMAN
(excited, to com)
You did it, Kirk!

SPOCK
(to Uhura)
Damage report, Commander.

UHURA
(off console)
There's some buckling on the starboard nacelle...
(reacts)
We've also got a hull breach in the saucer section. Emergency forcefields are in place and holding.

SPOCK
Location?

UHURA
Sections twenty through twenty-eight on decks ten... eleven...
(looks at Spock, with meaning)
...and twelve.

Everyone turns around and looks at Spock.

SPOCK
(to com)
Bridge to Captain Kirk.
(beat)
Captain Kirk, respond please.

Still no response. Spock tries to keep his expression neutral, but a shadow crosses his features. He heads for the Turbolift.

(CONTINUED)

32 CONTINUED: 32

SPOCK
(to Uhura)
Have Doctor McCoy meet me on deck twelve.

Harriman, very concerned, gets up and follows Spock. They EXIT to the Turbolift.

CUT TO:

33 INT. ENTERPRISE-B - CORRIDOR 33

Spock and Harriman head down the Corridor. They round a bend... and then stop short. They react to something ahead of them...

34 NEW ANGLE 34

Revealing that the corridor ahead of them is GONE. A jagged hole has been ripped in the ship and OPEN SPACE can be seen beyond the twisted metal. A FORCEFIELD flickers on and off, holding the vacuum of space at bay.

Spock and Harriman look at the awesome sight for a moment. Bones comes running up the Corridor behind them. He stops and reacts.

BONES
Oh, my God...
(beat)
Was anyone in there?

A long silent beat as Spock looks out into space.

SPOCK
Yes.

35 EXT. SPACE - ENTERPRISE-B - SAUCER SECTION 35

A HUGE CHUNK has been ripped out of the saucer, looking like an open wound. Spock, Bones, and Harriman can be seen standing inside the small Corridor, looking out into space...

CUT TO:

36 INT. ENTERPRISE-B - BRIDGE 36

A short time later. Chekov, Sulu, and Uhura at their positions. Spock, Harriman and Bones are standing near one of the aft stations, listening to Scotty, who is also on the Bridge.

SCOTTY
I've checked the entire ship and the surrounding space... there's no sign of him.

A silent moment. Bones looks to Spock, hoping to hear some sort of miracle.

BONES
Spock?

Spock takes a moment... looks at the empty command chair.

SPOCK
There is only one logical conclusion, Doctor.
(beat)
The Captain is dead.

A long beat as everyone is forced to accept this terrible truth. Spock sits down heavily at the science station.

BONES
(quiet)
Just a quick... run around the block...

SCOTTY
I never thought it would end like this...

Spock turns away from them all... lost in private thoughts.

SPOCK
All things must end, Mister Scott...

Bones moves to Spock, and the two men share a very private moment. Harriman finally breaks the stillness of the Bridge.

HARRIMAN
Let's go home.

Sulu works the console and Harriman goes down to the Captain's chair and takes command of his ship.

(CONTINUED)

36 CONTINUED: 36

Spock and Bones exchange a final look. Off the reactions of these two friends who've just lost someone very dear to them both...

CUT TO:

37 EXT. SPACE - ENTERPRISE-B 37

The crippled ship turns and then heads away...

FADE TO BLACK.

SUPER: SEVENTY-EIGHT YEARS LATER...

38 CLOSE ON A HALYARD 38

as a FLAG is quickly hoisted to the top of a mast. The flag reaches the top and then is caught by the wind -- the blue and white banner of the United Federation of Planets waves in the breeze.

MOVE TO REVEAL THE LOCATION:

39 EXT. SAILING VESSEL - DAY 39

A nineteenth century three-masted sailing vessel (about the size of a frigate) is hove-to and sitting in the water gently rocking. Across the stern of the ship, we can see the name ENTERPRISE picked out in gold letters.

40 ON THE MAIN DECK 40

Where PICARD and RIKER are standing before the assembled CREW of the ship. Everyone is dressed in full-dress naval uniforms of the period, complete with cocked hats, epaulettes, etc. The crew is standing at attention... the wind whistles through the rigging... the timbers creak... Picard grimly looks over his crew... then finally he nods to Riker.

RIKER
Bring out the prisoner!

A DRUMMER begins a long DRUM ROLL.

41 ON A HATCH 41

as WORF is brought on deck by TROI and GEORDI. Worf is shackled by hand and leg irons.

(CONTINUED)

41 CONTINUED: 41

Troi and Geordi hold him by either arm and shove him toward the Captain. The drum roll STOPS. Picard steps forward and peers steadily into Worf's face.

PICARD
Lieutenant Worf, are you prepared to face the charges?

A beat, then Troi jabs Worf in the side viciously.

TROI
Answer him.

WORF
I am prepared.

BEVERLY now steps forward, carrying a large rolled piece of parchment. She hands it to him. Picard opens the scroll and begins to read from it. In the b.g. Geordi removes Worf's shackles.

PICARD
"We, the officers and crew of the USS Enterprise, being of sound mind and judgement, hereby make the following charges against Lieutenant Worf: One. That he did knowingly and willfully perform above and beyond the call of duty on countless occasions. Two. That he has been a good and solid officer on this ship for one score less twelve years. And Three... most seriously... that he has earned the respect and admiration of the entire crew."

Picard puts away the scroll. He turns to the assembled crew.

PICARD
(continuing)
What say you to these charges?

CREW
Guilty!!!

The CREW YELLS wildly. Picard raises a hand and the ship falls silent.

PICARD
There can be only one punishment for such crimes...
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

41 CONTINUED: (2) 41

PICARD (Cont'd)
(beat)
I hereby promote you to the rank of Lieutenant Commander, with all the rights and privileges thereto. And may God have mercy on your soul.

Everyone ROARS in APPROVAL. Picard smiles at Worf and shakes his hand.

PICARD
(continuing)
Congratulations, Commander.

WORF
(smiles)
Thank you, sir.

Picard continues to smile at him for a moment... then turns to Riker.

PICARD
(casually)
Number One?

RIKER
Extend the plank!!

Worf's face registers surprise as everyone GRABS HIM and hauls him toward the side, where a long plank is being pushed out over the water.

CREWMEMBERS
Into the sea with him... feed him to the sharks... walk the plank!... etc.

DATA is waiting patiently by the plank, holding a long PIKE. Worf is put on the plank and Data very calmly prods him with the pike until Worf is nearly at the end. Worf finally stops and turns around.

WORF
(a shout)
WAIT!!

Everyone falls silent for a moment. Worf looks over the side at the water below.

WORF
(a little embarrassed)
I can't swim.

(CONTINUED)

41 CONTINUED: (3) 41

DATA
(calmly, to Worf)
The Holodeck safety program is engaged... the computer will not let you drown. However, the sharks are quite convincing.

Data prods him with the pike and Worf FALLS INTO THE SEA with a huge SPLASH. Everyone LAUGHS and CHEERS.

42 ON DATA AND GEORDI 42

Geordi is smiling and laughing along with everyone else, but Data's face remains neutral -- he has no emotions, and cannot share in the merriment. In the b.g., Data's cat SPOT can be seen sitting on the rail. Data pets his cat and looks around for a moment... gets an idea.

DATA
Geordi... this may be a good time to field test my new emotional chip.

GEORDI
(looks around)
Right now? You sure?

DATA
A social gathering of this nature should be the ideal situation.
(beat)
I would also... like to join in the fun.

Worf tries to climb up the side, but slips and falls back in the sea again, much to everyone's amusement. Geordi smiles and finally agrees.

GEORDI
You're right... let's give it a try.

Geordi TAKES OFF A PANEL on Data's head, revealing the circuitry within. He makes a couple of adjustments to the circuitry... Data reacts with a head tilt... then Geordi closes up the panel.

GEORDI
Okay... it's activated. Now don't force the emotions... just try to let them happen.

(CONTINUED)

42 CONTINUED: 42

As Data thinks about this for a moment, Worf is trying to come up the side of the ship again. This time, Beverly reaches out and offers him a hand.

BEVERLY
Need some help... Commander?

He takes her hand.

WORF
Thank you.

Worf pulls her over the side and Beverly FALLS into the ocean.

BEVERLY
Worf, you son of a --

There's a loud SPLASH as she hits the water. There is a general LAUGH from the crowd. But this time, Data laughs too... in fact he laughs louder than anyone else. Geordi and Data look at each other. A look of elation and astonishment comes over Data... he's waited for this all his life.

DATA
(amazed)
Geordi... it is working. I found that... quite humorous.

Data laughs again and Geordi laughs with him.

43 PICARD AND RIKER 43

are standing on the quarterdeck as a very wet Beverly comes up on deck.

PICARD
Well, now that we're all aboard...
(beat, then smiles)
Number One, bring the ship before the wind.
(savoring the moment)
Let's see what's out there.

RIKER
Aye, aye sir.

Riker looks to Troi, who then takes the ship's wheel.

(CONTINUED)

43 CONTINUED: 43

RIKER
(shouts)
Helm-a-lee! Raise up tacks and stand by the braces!

Troi spins the wheel as the crew springs into action and rushes to their places aloft and on deck.

44 THE SAILS 44

break out into large billowing sheets of creamy white as they fill with the wind.

45 THE ENTERPRISE 45

turns and comes before the wind... a lovely, living thing moving across the wide seas...

46 PICARD AND RIKER 46

Picard is drinking in the scene with a look of great satisfaction and contentment.

PICARD
(to Troi)
Let her fall off a point... steady.
(beat, to Riker)
Imagine what it was like, Wil. No engines... no computers... just the wind, the sea and the stars to guide you.

RIKER
Bad food, brutal discipline...
(beat)
No women.

COM VOICE
Bridge to Captain Picard.

PICARD
Picard here.

COM VOICE
There is a personal message for you from Earth.

PICARD
(puzzled)
Put it through down here.

(CONTINUED)

46 CONTINUED: 46

Picard walks toward the bow.

PICARD
(continuing, to com)
Computer, arch.

A U-shaped ARCH with several computer panels visible APPEARS on the forecastle. It's a strange sight to see a piece of the 24th century on the deck of this ship. Picard goes to the arch and activates one of the monitors and waits for the transmission to appear. A text message APPEARS and he starts to read it. After a moment, he reacts with shock and dismay to something on the screen.

47 ON TROI 47

whose attention has been drawn to Picard, at the arch. She reacts with concern at the expression on his face.

TROI
(to crewmember)
Here. Take the wheel.

Troi moves toward the bow.

48 ON PICARD 48

whose face is now ashen with shock. Clearly he has just read something on the screen which is very disturbing. He stares into middle distance for a moment. Troi moves to him.

TROI
(quiet)
Captain, are you all right?

PICARD
Yes. Fine. If you'll excuse me...

He turns OFF the screen.

PICARD
(continuing)
Computer, exit.

The Holodeck DOORS APPEAR within the Arch. Picard is clearly distracted as he EXITS to the Corridor. Troi looks after him with concern.

49 NEW ANGLE 49

Favoring Riker. He takes a couple of steps toward Worf.

RIKER
(to Worf)
I think we should set the royals and --

There is a sudden SCREECH as Riker accidently STEPS on Spot the cat. Riker looks down at the creature... he hates cats.

RIKER
(calling up)
Data! Will you get your damn cat off the Holodeck!

DATA
Yes, sir. Right away, sir. Ahoy Spot!

Suddenly a com voice interrupts.

COM VOICE
Lieutenant Hayes to Commander Riker.

RIKER
Riker here.

COM VOICE
Sir, you're needed on the Bridge.

Riker sighs.

RIKER
(to Worf)
Never fails...
(to com)
On my way.

As Riker heads toward the bow of the ship...

50 EXT. SPACE - THE ENTERPRISE 50

The ship moving at impulse power.

51 INT. BRIDGE 51

Various N.D.S at their stations. Riker (still in costume) ENTERS and goes to the aft science station, where a LIEUTENANT HAYES is working.

(CONTINUED)

51 CONTINUED: 51

RIKER
What do you have?

HAYES
I'm not sure, sir.
(indicates monitor)
We started picking up some strange readings from the Amargosa System. It might be a subspace radio message, but it's pretty garbled.

RIKER
Amargosa... we've got a solar observatory in that system, don't we?

HAYES
Yes, sir. It could be a distress call... but Amargosa's usually pretty quiet.

CUT TO:

52 EXT. SPACE - SOLAR OBSERVATORY 52

A small Federation space station equipped with a complex optical array. It is UNDER ATTACK by a huge ROMULAN WARBIRD. The Warbird FIRES a series of PHASER BLASTS at the helpless station. (In the background, a YELLOW SUN can be seen.)

53 INT. SOLAR OBSERVATORY - OPS CENTER 53

A scene of chaos. The station is at RED ALERT. Consoles are EXPLODING. SCIENCE OFFICERS are scrambling to get the situation under control. The station is ROCKED.

54 NEW ANGLE 54

As SEVEN ARMED ROMULANS MATERIALIZE in the center of the room. Everyone dives for cover. Some Romulans start FIRING while others scan the room with tricorders -- clearly looking for something. A couple of Starfleet Officers pull phasers and a heated exchange of FIRE takes place.

55 ON SORAN 55

Doctor Soran, one of the survivors from the Lakul (and last seen in Sickbay aboard the Enterprise-B) is here. Soran has not aged at all over the years but he does have a prominent scar on his face from the earlier wound. He dodges a PHASER BLAST from one of the Romulans and then quickly dispatches the Romulan with a series of vicious blows -- clearly Soran is a man of great physical prowess.

56 A ROMULAN OFFICER 56

grabs a STARFLEET ENSIGN and slams him against a console next to a large WINDOW. SUNLIGHT streams in through the window into the Ensign's face.

ROMULAN
Trilithium -- where is it?

ENSIGN
(confused)
What?

ROMULAN
Tell me!

Suddenly, a SHADOW passes over the Ensign's face. He looks outside and reacts --

57 EXT. SPACE - THE SUN 57

Coming out of the glare of the star, a Federation Starship comes roaring into view. IT'S THE USS ENTERPRISE-D!

58 INT. ENTERPRISE - BRIDGE 58

Picard in Command. Data and Troi at their stations. Geordi at Tactical. They didn't have time to change, so they are all still dressed in their costumes from the party. The ship is at RED ALERT.

PICARD
Lock on phasers and fire.

Geordi works...

59 EXT. SPACE - ENTERPRISE AND WARBIRD 59

The Enterprise FIRES on the Romulan ship - scores a direct hit.

(CONTINUED)

59 CONTINUED: 59

The Warbird turns and FIRES BACK at the Enterprise...

60 INT. OBSERVATORY OPS 60

The Romulan, still looking out the window, drops the Ensign.

ROMULAN
Doro GA!! (a curse)

The Romulan pulls his disruptor and aims at the Ensign --

Suddenly, a giant HAND grabs the Romulan by the throat -- picks him up and THROWS him through the air. He smashes into a console on the far side of the room.

61 INCLUDE WORF 61

who has just dispatched the Romulan. He's still wearing his wet 19th century costume from the party. The Ensign stares up at him, open-mouthed, not sure what to make of the sight. Worf sees his reaction and straightens his uniform slightly.

WORF
Something wrong?

ENSIGN
No...

62 RIKER 62

is leading a team of FOUR ENTERPRISE GUARDS in combat against the Romulans. There is a heated exchange of FIRE. TWO Enterprise Crewmembers are hit by disruptors and go down.

63 ANGLE ON ROMULAN COMMANDER 63

taking cover with his remaining men, dodging phaser fire. He pulls out a communicator.

ROMULAN #2
(to com)
Kyuro tu-CHA! (Beam us out!)

All of the surviving Romulans DEMATERIALIZE.

64 EXT. SPACE - ENTERPRISE AND WARBIRD 64

The Warbird moves away and CLOAKS. Gone.

65 INT. BRIDGE 65

Picard and the others, tense.

DATA
The Warbird has cloaked.

GEORDI
Sensors show we knocked out three of their power couplings and one reactor. They won't be coming back soon.

PICARD
Mister Data, open a channel to the Warbird. Tell them... to have a nice day.

CUT TO:

66 EXT. SPACE - THE ENTERPRISE 66

hanging in space near the observatory. The star is clearly visible in the background.

PICARD (v.o.)
Captain's Log, Stardate 48646.3. Starfleet Command is very concerned that the unprovoked attack on the Amargosa Observatory may indicate a new Romulan threat in this sector. We are continuing to investigate the incident and complete repairs on the observatory.

67 INT. TEN FORWARD 67

The room is bustling with patrons and activity. Riker (now back in uniform) ENTERS with a group of FEDERATION SCIENTISTS. The scientists are dogging his every move, all jabbering at him at once. Riker looks harried.

SCIENTISTS
When will the sensor relays be back on-line? How much time until I can return to the station?
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

67 CONTINUED: 67

SCIENTISTS (Cont'd)
My experiments have to be completed within the day! Are you listening to me? etc.

Riker stops and tries to calm them.

RIKER
Gentlemen, gentlemen, please.

They fall silent.

RIKER
(continuing)
We're going to make every effort to get all of your equipment back on-line. But it's going to take some time. So, I suggest you relax and enjoy yourselves. Ten Forward is at your disposal.

The scientists are not really happy about this, and they grumble amongst themselves, moving to a couple tables in the room.

Riker heads for the door, eager to escape, but suddenly a HAND grabs him and stops him short. He turns and finds himself face-to-face with Doctor Soran. Soran's imposing physical presence and demeanor gives Riker pause. Is Soran about to hit him? Soran speaks, his voice low and almost threatening, even though the words are benign.

SORAN
Commander, I need power restored to the observatory's probe launch sequencer. I must continue with my experiments.

Riker pulls his arm away from Soran's grip.

RIKER
Like I said, Doctor Soran... we're doing the best we can. Our first priority is defense systems and life support, we'll get to your experiments as soon as we can.

Riker turns and heads for the door. Soran looks after him for a moment, then pulls out an ANTIQUE POCKET WATCH and opens it. He looks at the watch for a long moment... he seems concerned about something.

(CONTINUED)

67 CONTINUED: (2) 67

He snaps the watch closed and glances up -- and freezes, shocked by something he sees...

68 SORAN'S POV 68

of the bar, where Guinan is working. She has not aged at all since the Enterprise-B. She has not seen Soran.

69 RESUME SORAN 69

He watches her for a beat.

SORAN
(quiet)
Guinan...

He quickly turns for the door...

CUT TO:

70 INT. ENTERPRISE ENGINEERING 70

Geordi and Data are at the pool table, working on the consoles.

GEORDI
It looks like everything's ready on the observatory... let's start transferring power to their lateral relays...

They both work.

DATA
(works)
Initiating power transfer...

Data is still thinking about Beverly and Worf falling into the water. He smiles and perfectly IMITATES their voices. (Data has the ability to reproduce other people's voices.)

DATA
(continuing, softly)
"Need some help, Commander?"...
"Thank you"...

Data chuckles to himself. Geordi throws him a look, but tries to continue working.

(CONTINUED)

70 CONTINUED: 70

GEORDI
Transfer levels are holding steady...

A beat as they work.

DATA
"Worf, you son of a --

Data makes a perfect recreation of the SPLASHING noise, and then laughs uproariously.

GEORDI
Data... Data.

Data stops laughing.

GEORDI
(continuing)
It wasn't that funny.

DATA
But everyone laughed.

GEORDI
Yeah, but you've been laughing about it for the last three hours. It's great that you're feeling emotions... but you have to learn to control them.

Data struggles to maintain his composure.

DATA
I believe you are right. I am feeling a little... overwhelmed.

Geordi opens the panel on his head again... begins to make an adjustment with a tool...

GEORDI
We should take a look at the CVR interface on your emotion chip. Maybe it needs some --

Suddenly there is a SHOWER OF SPARKS from Data's head. Geordi jumps back as Data begins to JERK and SHAKE and goes into a bizarre "emotional seizure".

A rush of EMOTIONS race across his face... anger, passion, laughter, shock, fear... a kaleidoscopic blur of reactions contort his features for a few beats... then finally it stops and Data FALLS to the ground.

(CONTINUED)

70 CONTINUED: (2) 70

Geordi moves to him quickly in concern.

GEORDI
Data! Are you all right?

Data has a dazed look on his face... he answers after a long beat.

DATA
I... do not know.

Off his expression...

CUT TO:

71 INT. ENGINEERING - GEORDI'S OFFICE 71

A short time later. Data is now sitting in a chair as Geordi examines the inside of his head with a tricorder and a tech device. Picard and Riker are now also here and they listen to Geordi with concern. Mid-conversation.

GEORDI
... the chip must have overloaded his positronic relays and caused some kind of "emotional seizure."
(beat)
It looks like the surge fused the chip into his neural net.

RIKER
You mean you can't get it out?

GEORDI
Not without completely dismantling his cerebral conduit... and I don't want to try that unless we have to.

PICARD
Is the chip still active?

GEORDI
We'll see.

PICARD
(to Data)
How do you feel?

Data thinks for a moment. He seems worried... anxious.

(CONTINUED)

71 CONTINUED: 71

DATA
I believe I feel...

Data suddenly CRUSHES the tricorder in his hand.

DATA
... a little tense.

Picard and Riker exchange a look.

PICARD
(to Geordi)
Well... keep me informed.
(to Data)
In the meantime, Mister Data... try to relax.

DATA
(tense)
Yes, sir.

Data still looks pretty worried as Picard and Riker EXIT.

72 INT. CORRIDOR - CONTINUOUS 72

Picard and Riker walking down the corridor, which is alive with activity -- crewmembers and civilians moving to and fro.

RIKER
I've finished interviewing the officers from the observatory. One interesting bit of information came up: the Romulans seemed to be looking for something called <u>trilithium</u>.

PICARD
(shocked)
Trilithium?

RIKER
Have you heard of it?

PICARD
The Klingons experimented with trilithium over a decade ago. Theoretically, a trilithium-based explosive would be thousands of times more powerful than an anti-matter weapon.

(CONTINUED)

72 CONTINUED: 72

RIKER
What happened to their research?

PICARD
As I recall, they couldn't find a way to stabilize the compound long enough for it to be of any use. Klingons, Romulans, even Federation scientists have continued the experiments, but with no success.

RIKER
So, why were the Romulans looking for it on a Federation observatory?

PICARD
I don't know. But have the next Away Team scan the observatory for trilithium.

They walk a moment. Riker remembers something and looks a little sober.

RIKER
Oh... I've been meaning to talk to you about the two crewmembers we lost in the attack.

Picard's face noticeably darkens at the mention of the deaths.

PICARD
What about them?

RIKER
Deanna tells me their families took the news pretty hard. A visit from the Captain might do them some good.

Picard's response is uncharacteristically cold, almost harsh.

PICARD
You take care of it, Number One. I don't have time.

Riker is a little surprised. They stop outside the Turbolift doors.

(CONTINUED)

72 CONTINUED: (2) 72

RIKER
If you don't mind my saying so, it's usually the Captain's place to speak with --

PICARD
(harsh)
And it's usually the First Officer's place to take some of the burden from his Captain.

Picard EXITS into the Turbolift, leaving Riker looking shocked at the force of Picard's reaction.

CUT TO:

73 EXT. SPACE - THE OBSERVATORY 73

The station hangs in space.

74 INT. OBSERVATORY OPS 74

The station is still a wreck. Geordi and an engineer named FARRELL are scanning the room with tricorders.

GEORDI
(off tricorder)
There's no sign of any trilithium in here...

Geordi indicates a Corridor. They EXIT in that direction...

75 INT. OBSERVATORY CORRIDOR - CONTINUOUS 75

A short Corridor connecting the Ops Center with other compartments. Geordi and Farrell stop in front of a closed door.

GEORDI
There's some kind of dampening field here... I can't scan beyond this door.

Geordi works a panel next to the door for a moment and the door OPENS. They EXIT to...

76 INT. OBSERVATORY PROBE ROOM - CONTINUOUS 76

A small room with several PROBES stacked in holding racks. Geordi continues to scan.

FARRELL
(off tricorder)
Still nothing.

GEORDI
Someone went to a lot of trouble to shield this room. Let's have a look around.

They put their tricorders away and begin looking around the room. Geordi begins inspecting the probes... finally stops at one probe which has SEVERAL ODD DEVICES attached to the side.

GEORDI
Farrell, take a look at this.
(Farrell comes over)
You ever seen a solar probe with this kind of configuration?

FARRELL
No, sir.

SORAN'S VOICE
May I help you, gentlemen?

77 INCLUDE SORAN 77

standing in the room. Geordi and Farrell are surprised to see him. They didn't hear him come in.

GEORDI
Oh... Doctor... yeah, as a matter of fact, you can. We're curious about this probe. Do you know what it's for?

Soran walks over and eyes the probe.

SORAN
I believe it's part of a new imaging system Doctor Brok has been working on.

Geordi takes a closer look at the probe and suddenly reacts to something.

(CONTINUED)

77 CONTINUED: 77

GEORDI
Wait a minute... my VISOR's picking up some kind of theta band residual...

SORAN
Your... VISOR?

GEORDI
What? Oh.
(re: VISOR)
This lets me see across the electromagnetic spectrum. Right now, it's picking up something in the theta band... it could be a trilithium signature.

Soran moves closer to him, seemingly fascinated by the VISOR.

SORAN
(re: VISOR)
How interesting... may I see it?

GEORDI
Not right now, Doctor. I think we'd better get back to the Enterprise...

SORAN
Actually... I insist.

Soran swings at Geordi and PUNCHES him in the face, KNOCKING the VISOR across the room. Geordi staggers back, blind and defenseless. Before Farrell can react to this unexpected attack, Soran whirls on him and quickly dispatches him with several brutal and violent BLOWS.

Farrell falls to the deck. Soran turns to Geordi, who is backed against the probe with his arms out. A blind man in the room with a dangerous foe.

GEORDI
(desperate)
What do you want?

SORAN
Much more than you can possibly imagine...

As Soran walks toward Geordi, threatening...

CUT TO:

78 INT. PICARD'S QUARTERS 78

CLOSE ON replicator.

PICARD'S VOICE
Tea. Earl Grey. Hot.

A cup of tea MATERIALIZES. INCLUDE Picard as he takes the tea and sits down. He stares out the window at the glowing star outside. The door CHIMES.

PICARD
Come.

Troi ENTERS.

PICARD
(continuing)
Counselor. What can I do for you?

TROI
I came to see if there was anything I could do for you.
(beat)
Ever since you got that message on the Holodeck, I've sensed that you've been... angry... even a little afraid.

He looks at her in irritation.

PICARD
The mark of a good counselor is knowing not only when she's needed... but when she's not needed.

TROI
You can't fool an empath, Captain. I know exactly when I'm needed.

PICARD
Well, with all due respect to your Betazoid "senses" I prefer to be alone right now.

TROI
Very well. I suppose I could make out my weekly report to Starfleet Command without your input.
(beat)
"Dear Admiral Sanders... regarding the unusual behavior of Jean-Luc Picard. I find him increasingly irritable... remote... and uncooperative.
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

78 CONTINUED: 78

TROI (Cont'd)
I recommend forced shore leave at a Starbase facility in order to - "

PICARD
All right, all right, you've made your point.

He sets down the tea in irritation. Troi takes a seat and patiently waits. Picard gets up... moves around the room for a moment... and stops. He speaks in a flat and unemotional tone of voice:

PICARD
(continuing)
The message I received...
(beat)
My brother has died.

Troi reacts, genuinely surprised.

TROI
Captain, I'm sorry. What happened?

Picard speaks matter-of-fact, holding himself very tightly, not letting any emotion bleed through.

PICARD
Two days ago, Robert went out to prune some vines in one of the fields. When he didn't come back for breakfast, his wife went out looking for him... Heart attack.

TROI
Have you made arrangements to go home for the funeral?

PICARD
We're a long way from Earth. There's not enough time.

TROI
I'm sure we could find a way... perhaps even delay the funeral a day or two --

Picard turns on her, displaying a rare burst of anger.

(CONTINUED)

78 CONTINUED: (2) 78

PICARD
(hard)
It's my choice, and I've decided not to go. We're all mortal, we all have our time, and Robert's has come. I see no point in dwelling on it, so spare me the psychoanalysis.

Picard stops. Catches himself. He can't help but smile a little ironically at his outburst.

PICARD
(continuing, quietly)
I'm sorry. It would seem the Captain doth protest too much.

TROI
It's all right.

Picard takes a moment. He suddenly looks very tired.

PICARD
Robert was only four years older than I. When I was a boy, that seemed like an eternity. In my eyes, he was practically an adult. And I've always felt that was one of the reasons we were never close as children...
(beat)
But now, four years doesn't seem like very much time at all. In fact, it feels... uncomfortably close...

He trails off.

TROI
It's only natural to feel a heightened sense of one's own mortality when someone close to us dies.

PICARD
I've had brushes with death... more than I care to contemplate. It's a calculated risk that goes along with wearing this uniform...

Picard moves about the room, and a shadow crosses his face. He's getting to the heart of the matter.

(CONTINUED)

78 CONTINUED: (3) 78

PICARD
(continuing)
But my brother wasn't wearing a uniform out in that vineyard. He wasn't fighting the Romulans or the Borg. His only enemy was time.
(beat)
I've begun to realize that... there are fewer days ahead than there are behind...
(beat)
How do I fight against that?

A quiet beat as Troi considers him.

TROI
Captain, perhaps we --

Suddenly, a BLINDING BURST OF LIGHT from outside the windows washes into the room. They rush to the windows. They look outside and react to what they see...

79 ANGLE ON STAR 79

The yellow star seen earlier has turned an angry RED color. It's mottled with DARK SPOTS. Huge SOLAR FLARES leap from the surface, sending enormous plumes of matter and fire into space.

80 RESUME PICARD AND TROI 80

RIKER'S COM VOICE
Red Alert! All hands to duty stations!

Picard and Troi run out of the room...

CUT TO:

81 INT. BRIDGE 81

Picard and Troi ENTER from a Turbolift. Riker, Worf and Data at their stations. The star is on the Viewscreen, getting DARKER by the second... more flaming debris being ejected into space.

PICARD
Report.

(CONTINUED)

81 CONTINUED: 81

DATA
A quantum implosion has occurred within the star. All nuclear fusion is breaking down.

PICARD
How is that possible?

DATA
Unknown, sir. But the star will collapse in a matter of minutes.

WORF
(off console)
Sir. The implosion has produced a level twelve shock wave.

RIKER
(shocked)
Level twelve? That'll destroy everything in this system.

PICARD
(to com)
Bridge to Transporter Room Three - evacuate the observatory immediately.

TRANSPORTER COM VOICE
Transporter Room to Bridge. I can't locate Commander La Forge or Ensign Farrell, sir.

RIKER
(to Worf)
Did they return to the ship?

WORF
(works)
No, sir. They are not aboard.

PICARD
How long until the shock wave hits the observatory?

DATA
Four minutes forty seconds.

Picard looks at Riker, who then quickly heads for the Turbolift.

RIKER
Mister Worf.

(CONTINUED)

81 CONTINUED: (2) 81

Riker and Worf EXIT. As Picard watches the Viewscreen...

82 EXT. SPACE - THE SUN 82

The star is almost entirely DARK. Coming out from the star is a HUGE SHOCK WAVE - a rapidly growing sphere of energy.

83 INT. OBSERVATORY PROBE ROOM 83

Soran is standing at a console watching the star's collapse on a monitor when the door suddenly OPENS. Soran whirls around and FIRES his phaser at Riker and Worf. They dive for cover just outside the room. (NOTE: The probe Geordi examined earlier is now gone.)

RIKER
(to Worf)
What the hell's he doing?

Worf dodges another phaser blast and sees the unconscious forms of Geordi and Farrell on the deck.

DATA'S COM VOICE
Enterprise to Commander Riker, you have two minutes left, sir.

RIKER
(yells to Soran)
Soran, did you hear that? There's a level twelve shock wave coming. We've got to get out of here!

Soran's only answer is another phaser blast.

84 INT. BRIDGE 84

As before. An ALARM suddenly BEEPS on Data's console.

DATA
(urgent)
Sir. A Klingon battlecruiser is decloaking off the port bow.

Shocked reactions.

PICARD
What?

85 INCLUDE VIEWSCREEN 85

which shows an old-style Klingon Battlecruiser DECLOAKING near the Observatory.

86 INT. OBSERVATORY PROBE ROOM 86

Soran is continuing to SHOOT at Riker and Worf. Suddenly his communicator BEEPS. Soran reaches down and grabs the unconscious Geordi by the collar and the two of them DEMATERIALIZE. (Soran has the VISOR in his hand.) Riker and Worf react, then rush toward the unconscious Farrell.

RIKER
(hits combadge)
Transporter Room. Lock on and beam us out as soon as we're clear of the dampening field!

87 EXT. SPACE - THE KLINGON SHIP 87

The battlecruiser CLOAKS and vanishes.

88 INT. BRIDGE 88

As before.

TRANSPORTER COM VOICE
Transporter Room to Bridge. I have the Away Team aboard, sir.

PICARD
(to Con)
Helm, warp one, engage.

89 EXT. SPACE - ENTERPRISE & OBSERVATORY 89

The Enterprise WARPS away just as the shock wave reaches the observatory and VAPORIZES it in a fiery EXPLOSION.

CUT TO:

90 INT. KLINGON BATTLECRUISER - BRIDGE 90

ON THE VIEWSCREEN

where we can see a distant view of the darkening star and shock wave. MOVE TO REVEAL:

(CONTINUED)

90 CONTINUED: 90

We are inside an old Klingon ship -- it's beaten up and patched in several places, obviously not a first-line model. Watching the Viewscreen are LURSA and B'ETOR, two powerful-looking Klingon women... they are sisters... aggressive... seductive... and very dangerous. Several N.D. MALE KLINGONS man the various stations.

The sisters stare at the image of the destroyed sun in awe.

B'ETOR
Toh-pak-cha... (Glorious...)

LURSA
HoS qorDu... (A great power...)

Soran now ENTERS the Bridge. His expression is dark and angry. He is clearly not a prisoner here and he strides up to the sisters.

B'ETOR
(excited, to Soran)
You've done it, Soran.

But without warning, Soran HITS B'Etor squarely in the jaw, knocking her back over a console. Several Klingons leap to their feet, drawing their weapons... but B'Etor holds up a hand as she gets to one knee.

B'ETOR
Wait!

She dabs at a trickle of blood at the corner of her mouth... her expression and voice turn sultry... seductive.

B'ETOR
(to Soran)
I hope for your sake that you are initiating a mating ritual.

SORAN
You got careless. The Romulans came looking for their missing trilithium.

LURSA
Impossible. We left no survivors on their outpost.

B'Etor has now gotten to her feet in the b.g.

(CONTINUED)

90 CONTINUED: (2) 90

SORAN
They knew it was aboard the observatory. If the Enterprise hadn't intervened, they would have found it.

LURSA
But they didn't find it... and now we have a weapon of unlimited power.

SORAN
I have the weapon, Lursa. And if you ever want me to give it to you, I advise you to be a little more careful in the future.

B'Etor grabs Soran and holds a wicked-looking knife to his throat. Her expression is predatory... threatening... but still with a sexual subtext.

B'ETOR
Perhaps we are tired of waiting.

Soran is unfazed by this threat.

SORAN
Without my research... the trilithium is worthless... as are your plans to reconquer the Klingon Empire.

Lursa reaches out and calmly pushes her sister's knife away.

SORAN
Set course for the Veridian system. Maximum warp.

LURSA
(to Helm)
Bosh-ta-JaH Veridian. (Set course for Veridian.)

A Klingon GUARD ENTERS dragging the unconscious Geordi.

KLINGON GUARD
(re: Geordi)
What shall I do with this?

Soran moves toward Geordi, a grim look on his face.

(CONTINUED)

90 CONTINUED: (3) 90

SORAN
Bring him with me. I need some answers from Mister La Forge.

Soran EXITS.

CUT TO:

91 EXT. SPACE - THE ENTERPRISE 91

The ship hangs in space.

92 INT. OBSERVATION LOUNGE 92

Picard is pacing, frustrated, tired -- it looks like he's been working a long time. PADDS and computer terminals are spread across the table. On one wall a LARGE VIEWSCREEN (much larger than the normal screen) is crowded with various GRAPHICS, text, Starfleet records, reports, and other information.

The door opens. Riker and Beverly ENTER. Picard does not stop pacing while they deliver their reports.

BEVERLY
(to Picard)
Ensign Farrell is in stable condition. He has a severe concussion... some internal bleeding... but I think he's going to be fine.

Picard nods.

RIKER
(to Picard)
I've spoken to the Klingon High Council, sir. They identified the battlecruiser as belonging to the Duras sisters.

That stops Picard in his tracks.

PICARD
Lursa and B'Etor...?

He tosses a PADD down in irritation.

(CONTINUED)

92 CONTINUED: 92

PICARD
This doesn't make any sense. Soran, a renowned stellar physicist... somehow uses trilithium to destroy a star... kidnaps my Chief Engineer... and escapes with a pair of Klingon renegades... Why? What the hell's going on?

Riker and Beverly exchange a look. Picard takes a breath and sits in frustration, glaring off into space. Riker moves to the Viewscreen, looks at the data on it.

RIKER
Find anything in Soran's background?

PICARD
He's an El-Aurian, and he's over three hundred years old. He's never been anywhere near the Amargosa system before this... or had any dealings with the Klingons... and there's certainly no connection with Geordi La Forge.

BEVERLY
If he has developed a trilithium weapon, maybe he's selling it to the Klingons.

PICARD
But why sell it to the Duras sisters? They can't offer him the kind of reward he could get from the Klingon High Council or the Ferengi... or even the Cardassians for that matter.

Riker taps a PADD and scrolls through some information.

RIKER
(off terminal)
Married... two children... grandchildren...

PICARD
He lost his entire family when the Borg destroyed El-Auria. He escaped with a handful of other refugees aboard three transport ships.

(CONTINUED)

92 CONTINUED: (2) 92

RIKER
(off PADD)
It says here the three ships were destroyed...
(surprised)
Soran and forty-six others were rescued by the Enterprise-B. I remember something about that...

PICARD
That was the mission where James Kirk was killed.

RIKER
That's right...

Riker studies the PADD a little longer.

RIKER
(continuing)
We've got a medical log on Soran from the Enterprise-B.

He hands the PADD to Picard, who eyes it and touches a control on the PADD.

PICARD
Computer -- display this log.

The image of BONES MCCOY appears on the screen, looking into the camera, making a log. He looks exactly as he did at the beginning of the movie.

BONES
Attending physician's report, regarding Tolian Soran. Patient has exhibited signs of extreme dementia, paranoia, and violent tendencies. Symptoms are consistent with other Lakul survivors all of whom were exposed to the phenomenon. Recommend full psychological evaluation.

The logs ENDS.

BEVERLY
Phenomenon...?

PICARD
The Lakul was destroyed by an energy ribbon it encountered on its way to Earth.

(CONTINUED)

92 CONTINUED: (3) 92

RIKER
The doctor said all the survivors were affected by this... ribbon. Maybe we should check on the others.

PICARD
Computer -- run a profile index of the survivors of the transport ship Lakul.

A series of PHOTOS and biographical information scrolls across the screen. Suddenly, Picard reacts to something.

PICARD
Stop. Scroll back.

The photos scroll backwards.

PICARD
Stop.

The listing stops on a picture of GUINAN with some medical information next to it. OFF their stunned reactions...

CUT TO:

93 INT. GUINAN'S QUARTERS 93

CLOSE ON GUINAN as she looks up, surprised.

GUINAN
Soran? That's a name I haven't heard in a long time.

MOVE TO REVEAL Guinan's Quarters, which are unlike any of the others on the Enterprise. None of the standard furniture, consoles, or decoration is present. The floor is made of tile, not carpet... the walls are draped in exotic fabric. The lighting is moody and subdued.

Picard is standing before Guinan, who is sitting cross-legged on the floor.

PICARD
Do you remember him?

(CONTINUED)

93 CONTINUED: 93

GUINAN
Oh yes... I remember everyone who was on the Lakul... every face... even the ones that didn't make it...

Guinan stands and begins to move about the room... she's clearly troubled by the memories. She hesitates, looks off into the middle-distance for a few moments. Picard moves to her.

PICARD
Guinan. It's important that you tell me what you know. We think Soran's developed a weapon... a terrible weapon. It might give him enough power to --

GUINAN
Soran doesn't care about power, or weapons. All he cares about is getting back to the nexus.

PICARD
What's the "nexus"?

Guinan moves to a table and begins to shift around some exotic-looking alien artifacts... distracting herself... this is difficult for her to discuss.

GUINAN
It's a place I've tried very hard to forget...

She makes the decision to plunge ahead.

GUINAN
(continuing)
That ribbon wasn't just some random energy phenomenon travelling through space... it was a doorway. It led to another place... the nexus. It doesn't exist in our universe... and it doesn't play by the same rules either.

PICARD
What happened to you?

(CONTINUED)

93 CONTINUED: (2) 93

GUINAN
I can't remember very much.. what it looked like, or how long I was there... but I do remember how it felt...

She turns to him and her face is filled with some kind of awe and joy at the memory.

GUINAN
It was like being inside... joy. As if joy was a real thing that I could wrap around myself. I've never been so content...

A long beat as Picard absorbs her words.

PICARD
But then you were beamed away...

Guinan shows a rare burst of anger.

GUINAN
I was pulled away. I didn't want to leave. None of us wanted to leave... All I could think about was getting back... I didn't care what I had to do.

Guinan moves to a window and looks out at the stars.

GUINAN
(continuing)
It took a long time, but eventually I learned to live with it. And I began to realize that my experience in the nexus had changed me...
(beat)
I knew things about people... about events... about time...

PICARD
Your "sixth sense"... I've always wondered where it came from...

Beat.

PICARD
And what about Soran?

(CONTINUED)

93 CONTINUED: (3) 93

GUINAN
I think Soran's still obsessed with getting back. And if I'm right, he'll do anything to find that doorway again.

PICARD
But why destroy a star...?
(beat)
Thank you, Guinan.

He heads for the door.

GUINAN
Let someone else do it, Jean-Luc.

Picard stops, looks at her.

GUINAN
Let them send another starship. Don't get near the ribbon. If you go into that nexus, you're not going to care about Soran or the Enterprise or me. All you're going to care about is how it feels to be there.
(beat)
And you're never going to come back.

Picard weighs her words... sees the warning in her eyes... and carefully backs away and EXITS.

CUT TO:

94 INT. KLINGON BATTLECRUISER - QUARTERS 94

A dimly-lit room somewhere in the bowels of the Klingon ship. Like every other room on this decrepit ship, the room looks well-worn and ill-maintained. Soran is seated behind a table, holding the VISOR. A PADD and Soran's pocketwatch sit on the table. Geordi is sitting in a chair across from him -- his shirt has been removed. He looks very tense.

SORAN
(re: VISOR)
A remarkable piece of equipment... but a little inelegant, wouldn't you say?
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

94 CONTINUED: 94

SORAN (Cont'd)
(beat)
Have you ever considered a prosthesis that would make you look a little more... normal?

GEORDI
What's normal?

SORAN
Normal is what everyone else is... and what you are not.

GEORDI
What do you want?

Soran takes a moment.

SORAN
As you may or may not be aware, I am an El-Aurian. Some people call us a race of "Listeners". We listen.
(beat)
Right now, Mister La Forge, you have my undivided attention. I want to listen to everything you know about trilithium... and me.

Geordi thinks.

GEORDI
Trilithium is an experimental compound developed by the Klingons. I think it's a derivative of --

Soran picks up a PADD from the desk and activates it. Suddenly something small and with sharp edges can be seen MOVING just underneath Geordi's skin near his chest. Geordi moves his hand to the spot, but then the protrusion is suddenly gone.

SORAN
I don't want a science lecture. You were on that observatory looking for trilithium... why?

GEORDI
I was ordered to by the Captain.

(CONTINUED)

94 CONTINUED: (2) 94

On the PADD in Soran's hand, we can now see the POV OF A TINY PROBE which appears to be travelling through a HUMAN ARTERY (similar to the image from a present day endoscopic probe).

SORAN
Why?

GEORDI
I don't know. He doesn't explain his orders to me.

On the PADD, we now see the image of a beating HUMAN HEART, its valves opening and closing as blood rushes through. Soran looks up at Geordi.

SORAN
My instincts tell me you're lying. And I know that can't be easy for you...
(off PADD)
I can see you have a good heart.

Soran taps a control on the PADD. Suddenly Geordi grabs his chest in pain. The image of the beating heart on the PADD STOPS. Soran watches Geordi for a few seconds, then taps the PADD again. The image of the heart starts beating again. Geordi gasps and starts to breathe.

SORAN
Oh... I forgot to tell you. While you were unconscious, I injected a nano-probe into your bloodstream. It's been navigating your cardiovascular system... and right now I've attached it to your left ventricle.
(smiles)
A little trick I picked up from the Borg.

GEORDI
(gasping)
Yeah... they're full of great ideas...

SORAN
I just stopped your heart for five seconds. It felt like an eternity, didn't it? Did you know that you can stop the human heart for up to ten minutes before the onset of brain damage?

(CONTINUED)

94 CONTINUED: (3) 94

GEORDI
No... I didn't know that...

SORAN
We learn something new about ourselves every day.
(beat)
Now. Maybe I didn't make myself clear. It is very important that you tell me exactly what Captain Picard knows.

GEORDI
I told you everything...

SORAN
I see.
(beat)
Let's try thirty seconds.

Soran taps a control on the PADD. Geordi gasps and strains against an unimaginable pain. Soran picks up his pocketwatch and opens the cover... sits back in his chair, watching the seconds tick away...

CUT TO:

95 INT. STELLAR CARTOGRAPHY 95

A room filled with exotic-looking devices, sensors, and computers which handle the enormous task of tracking the ship's position in space.

The monitors around the room display various diagrams of the ENERGY RIBBON (as seen in the beginning of the movie.)

Data is sitting at a computer console which has a great deal of complex information on the screen. Picard is standing next to him.

DATA
According to our information, the ribbon is a conflux of temporal energy which travels through our galaxy every thirty-nine point one years.

PICARD
When is it expected back?

(CONTINUED)

95 CONTINUED: 95

DATA
It has already entered the galaxy. It will pass through this sector in approximately thirty-one hours.

Picard moves about the room... he's frustrated... tired... but determined to find out what's going on.

PICARD
Guinan said Soran was trying to get back to the ribbon... if that's true, then there must be some connection with the Amargosa star.

DATA
The star's destruction has had numerous astro-physical effects within this sector. However, none of them appear to have a connection to the energy ribbon.

PICARD
Give me a list of those effects. I want to know every single thing which has been altered or changed... no matter how insignificant..

DATA
It will take a few moments for the computer to compile the information.

Data works the computer and then the computer begins to work. Data sighs -- his expression becomes downcast and gloomy. He sits down and puts his head in his hands. Picard finally has to say something.

PICARD
Data... are you all right?

DATA
No, sir. I am depressed.
(beat)
I have been unable to deactivate my emotional chip. I find myself constantly overwhelmed by... feelings and emotions that I do not understand and cannot control.
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

95 CONTINUED: (2) 95

DATA (Cont'd)
(beat)
I believe that I may have found my limitations as an artificial life form. If I can not handle emotions... then I will never become human.

He is so obviously despondent and dejected that Picard cannot help but be moved by his plight. He thinks for a long moment, then sees a way to help.

PICARD
Happy Birthday, Mister Data.

DATA
Sir?

PICARD
We all start life... as children... buffeted by feelings that we can't control and don't understand. It takes time... and a great deal of experience with those emotions before we can deal with them.
(beat)
You've only had emotions for two days. In a way, you've just been reborn.

Data thinks about this... and seems to find some comfort in the thought.

DATA
I had not considered that.

PICARD
Data, I think you should abandon your efforts to disable this emotional chip. Try to deal with your emotions. Don't fight them -- learn to understand them. You may find that they enhance your life in ways you could never imagine...

A look of wonder and joy comes across Data's face. His outlook is brighter and he feels much more hopeful and optimistic about the future.

DATA
Thank you, sir. I will.

(CONTINUED)

95 CONTINUED: (3) 95

The computer finishes its calculations and the console BEEPS. Data works the console.

DATA
(continuing)
According to our current information, the destruction of the Amargosa star has had the following effects in this sector: gamma emissions have increased by point zero five percent... the starship Bozeman was forced to make a course correction... a research project on Gorik Four was halted due to increased neutrino particles... ambient magnetic fields have decreased by --

PICARD
Wait. The Bozeman... why did it change course?

DATA
(matter of fact)
The destruction of the Amargosa star has altered the gravitational forces throughout the sector. Any ship passing through this region will have to make a minor course correction.

Picard is starting to get an idea... he's on to something here. He moves to a large table in the center of the room.

PICARD
(musing)
A minor course correction...
(beat)
Where is the ribbon now?

Data moves to the table to work... after a few beats, a THREE-DIMENSIONAL HOLOGRAPHIC map of the galaxy springs up above the table. A BLINKING DOT shows the position of the ribbon.

DATA
(continuing, re: dot)
This is its current position.

PICARD
Can you project its course?

(CONTINUED)

95 CONTINUED: (4) 95

DATA
I believe so.

Data works and now a RED LINE moves to form an arc through the starfield. Picard examines the display for a moment and nods... he's excited, on to something...

PICARD
Enhance grid A-nine.

Data works and the display now ZOOMS into a single SECTOR. The RED LINE cuts through the sector.

PICARD
(continuing)
Where was the Amargosa star?

Data works. A STAR is highlighted near the red line.

PICARD
(continuing)
Now... you said the gravitational forces in this sector have been altered... could that also affect the course of the ribbon?

DATA
(thinks, then surprised)
I believe so.

Data works and the holographic display CHANGES again. The red line representing the course of the ribbon now SHIFTS to the right -- AWAY from the Amargosa star's position. Picard is beginning to realize what's going on.

PICARD
That's what Soran's doing... he's changing its course.
(beat)
But <u>why</u>? Why try to alter its path... why not simply fly into it with a ship?

Data thinks for a moment.

DATA
Our records show that every ship which has approached the ribbon has either been destroyed or severely damaged.

Picard thinks about this... then has a flash of insight.

(CONTINUED)

95 CONTINUED: (5) 95

PICARD
He can't go to the ribbon... so he's trying to make the ribbon come to him.
(beat)
Data, is it going to pass near any M-class planets?

DATA
(works)
Yes, sir. There are two in the Veridian System.

The display ZOOMS IN on a star very close to the ribbon's path. We now see a SOLAR SYSTEM with a single STAR and FOUR PLANETS. The RED LINE moves directly through the system -- it passes very close to the third planet. Picard eyes that planet and points to it.

PICARD
It's very close to Veridian Three... but not close enough...

Picard's mind is going a mile a minute. He suddenly has a horrible realization.

PICARD
(continuing)
Data, what would happen to the ribbon's path if he destroyed the Veridian star itself?

Data works. On the display, the Veridian star suddenly DARKENS and GOES OUT. The RED LINE shifts slightly until it makes an exact INTERSECTION WITH THE THIRD PLANET. They both react to this sight... they're both aware of just how serious this is.

PICARD
(continuing)
That's where he's going.

DATA
It should be noted, sir, that the collapse of the Veridian star would produce a shock wave similar to the one we observed at Amargosa.

PICARD
(grim)
And destroy every planet in the system.

(CONTINUED)

95 CONTINUED: (6) 95

Picard eyes the graphic with a sense of dread.

PICARD
(continuing)
Are any of them inhabited?

DATA
(off console)
Veridian Three is uninhabited... but Veridian Four supports a pre-Industrial humanoid society.

PICARD
Population?

DATA
Approximately two hundred thirty million.

A grim beat.

PICARD
(to com)
Picard to Bridge.

WORF'S COM VOICE
Worf here, sir.

Picard heads for the Exit, a sense of urgency and determination in his every move.

PICARD
Red Alert, Mister Worf. Set a course for the Veridian System, maximum warp.

Picard and Data EXIT Engineering.

96 EXT. SPACE - THE ENTERPRISE 96

as it goes into warp.

CUT TO:

97 INT. KLINGON BATTLECRUISER - BRIDGE 97

Lursa and B'Etor in command as Soran ENTERS.

LURSA
Did you get anything from the human?

(CONTINUED)

97 CONTINUED: 97

SORAN
No. His heart just wasn't in it.

KLINGON HELM
(off console)
We have entered orbit of Veridian Three.

They look at the Viewscreen, which now shows VERIDIAN THREE, a green JUNGLE PLANET.

SORAN
Prepare to transport me to the surface.

B'ETOR
Wait. When do we get our payment?

Soran hands B'Etor a small computer CHIP.

SORAN
This contains all the information you'll need to build a trilithium weapon. It's been coded. Once I'm safely to the surface, I'll transmit the decryption sequence to you... not before.

An ALARM goes off on the Helmsman's console.

KLINGON HELM
(urgent)
Mistress -- a Federation starship is entering the system!

LURSA
What? On viewer.

The Helm works. The Viewscreen now shows the Enterprise at impulse entering the system. Reactions.

KLINGON HELM
They are hailing us.

B'ETOR
Du'cha. (On speakers.)

The Helm works. We hear PICARD'S COM VOICE.

(CONTINUED)

97 CONTINUED: (2) 97

PICARD'S COM VOICE
Klingon vessel. We know what you're doing, and we will destroy any probe launched toward the Veridian star. Surrender Doctor Soran and return our Chief Engineer immediately.

Soran's expression darkens.

B'ETOR
What do we do?

SORAN
We have no choice. Eliminate them.

B'ETOR
(reacts)
That is a Galaxy Class Starship. We are no match for them. We should cut our losses and leave.

SORAN
Leave and your dreams of reconquering the Klingon Empire with trilithium weapons will be over.

LURSA
This is an old ship. We do not have the power to fight them.

Soran thinks for a moment... then he gets an idea. He pulls Geordi's VISOR out of a pocket. He eyes it with intent.

SORAN
I think it's time we gave Mister La Forge back his sight.

OFF Lursa and B'Etor's curiosity...

CUT TO:

98 EXT. SPACE - THE ENTERPRISE 98

nearing the green jungle planet, Veridian Three. The planet's STAR is visible.

99 INT. BRIDGE 99

Picard is pacing. Riker, Data, Worf, Troi, N.D.s at their stations. The ship is at RED ALERT.

RIKER
Maybe they're not out there.

PICARD
They're just trying to decide whether a twenty year-old Klingon Battlecruiser is any match for the Federation flagship.

WORF
(off console)
Captain, Klingon vessel decloaking directly ahead.

100 EXT. SPACE - THE ENTERPRISE 100

The battlecruiser DECLOAKS in front of the Enterprise.

101 INT. BRIDGE 101

As before.

WORF
They are hailing.

PICARD
On screen.

On the Viewscreen, Lursa and B'Etor APPEAR.

LURSA
Captain. What an unexpected pleasure.

PICARD
Are you prepared to meet my demands?

LURSA
In the interests of interstellar peace, we are willing to return your Engineer to you... provided you leave the area immediately.

PICARD
What about Soran?

(CONTINUED)

101 CONTINUED: 101

LURSA
I'm afraid the doctor is no longer aboard our ship.

Beat.

PICARD
No deal.

Picard motions to Worf and the transmission is CUT OFF. Picard takes a seat.

PICARD
This shouldn't take long.

CUT TO:

102 INT. KLINGON BATTLECRUISER - BRIDGE 102

Lursa and B'Etor are watching a small MONITOR, which shows Soran standing in a jungle clearing.

B'ETOR
He will not accept La Forge without you...

LURSA
He cannot be reasoned with...

B'ETOR
He is insane!

Soran looks annoyed and contemptuous of his partners.

SORAN
On the contrary, he's being quite reasonable. The Captain knows what I'm doing, and he knows how to stop me...
(thinks)
However, the problem with reasonable men is that they always need to reason. Perhaps if I gave Picard an opportunity to utilize his diplomatic skills... a chance to dissuade me from my horrific plan...

Soran smiles.

(CONTINUED)

102 CONTINUED: 102

SORAN
Propose this...

CUT TO:

103 INT. ENTERPRISE BRIDGE 103

Lursa is on the Viewscreen, talking to Picard.

B'ETOR
We propose a compromise. Doctor Soran would be willing to... discuss this matter with you, Captain.

LURSA
Soran is on the planet's surface. We will beam you to our ship... then transport you to his location.

RIKER
(objects)
We can transport the Captain to the surface ourselves -- just give us the coordinates.

LURSA
The Doctor values his privacy.

PICARD
What about my officer?

B'ETOR
As a gesture of good will, we'll return Commander La Forge to you immediately.

PICARD
Agreed.

The transmission ENDS. Picard heads for the Turbolift.

PICARD
(continuing)
Number One, you have the Bridge. Have Doctor Crusher meet me in Transporter Room Three.

As Picard EXITS...

CUT TO:

104 INT. TRANSPORTER ROOM 104

Picard stands on the platform. Beverly and NURSE OGAWA stand nearby. The Transporter CHIEF works his console.

CHIEF
Receiving the coordinates, Captain.

PICARD
Energize.

Picard DEMATERIALIZES -- and at the same instant, Geordi MATERIALIZES. Beverly and Ogawa rush to his aide, pull out their tricorders and scan him. Geordi is conscious, and he's wearing his VISOR.

CUT TO:

105 EXT. PLANET'S SURFACE - JUNGLE CLEARING - DAY 105

A sun-lit canopy of trees and tropical foliage. Picard MATERIALIZES in a clearing in the dense setting. A moment as he looks around. Strange animals and birds can be heard. Finally, Picard hears a ticking sound. He turns...

106 INCLUDE SORAN 106

who is sitting on a rock behind Picard, calmly looking at his pocket watch. He also holds a Klingon disruptor, which he aims at Picard.

SORAN
Your communicator.

Picard tosses him his combadge, which Soran pockets. Picard looks around the clearing for a moment.

SORAN
(continuing)
If you're looking for the trilithium probe... it's several kilometers from here. You'll never find it.

PICARD
I don't have to find it, Soran. The Enterprise will destroy any probe launched from the planet's surface.... or the Klingon ship. It's over.

(CONTINUED)

106 CONTINUED: 106

SORAN
Perhaps. Or perhaps the Enterprise will be too busy to worry about a probe.

CUT TO:

107 INT. KLINGON BATTLECRUISER - BRIDGE 107

The Klingon Helmsman is working his console.

KLINGON HELM
I have established the link.

LURSA
Put it through over here.

Lursa and B'Etor move to one of the consoles with a large MONITOR. The screen shows STATIC for a few seconds, then clears to a distorted view of a CEILING on the ENTERPRISE -- this is GEORDI'S POV. (NOTE: The POV is slightly fritzed, but free of the usual VISOR effects.)

LURSA
(continuing)
It's working...

B'ETOR
Where is he?

Suddenly, Beverly's face looms large in the picture, as if she's leaning over Geordi. She smiles and starts talking. Lursa and B'Etor pull back in surprise at the image.

B'ETOR
(continuing)
Human females are so repulsive.

CUT TO:

108 INT. SICKBAY - CONTINUOUS 108

Beverly is leaning over Geordi, who is on a bio-bed. Mid-conversation.

(CONTINUED)

108 CONTINUED: 108

BEVERLY
...and some myocardial degeneration. I'm going to give you some hematozine, and I want to run more tests... but I think you're going to be fine.

GEORDI
Thanks, Doc.

CUT TO:

109 EXT. PLANET'S SURFACE - JUNGLE CLEARING - DAY 109

As before. Soran and Picard, mid-conversation.

PICARD
There must be another way into this nexus. Let us help you. We can work together to --

SORAN
I've spent eighty years looking for another way, Captain. This is the only one.

PICARD
And now you're willing to murder over two hundred million people.

He smiles a smile that doesn't quite reach his eyes.

SORAN
You must think I'm quite the madman. How can you possibly hope to reason with me?

Picard regards him cooly.

PICARD
(with meaning)
I wonder... did Leandra know that she married a man who was capable of mass murder?

Soran's expression suddenly changes to something dark and deadly.

(CONTINUED)

109 CONTINUED: 109

PICARD
(continuing, pressing on)
When you tucked your children into bed... do you suppose they ever suspected that the man they looked up to would one day kill millions of people as casually as a kiss goodnight?

Soran steps forward and BACKHANDS Picard with the disruptor pistol. Picard looks up at him from the dirt. Rage builds just beneath Soran's expression -- it looks like he might kill Picard right here...

SORAN
Enough.

PICARD
Your entire family and millions of others were killed when the Borg attacked El-Auria. Can't you see that what you're about to do is no different?

Soran glares at him... but he backs off, takes a breath, lets the anger pass.

SORAN
You're absolutely right. And there was a time when I wouldn't have hurt anyone. Then the Borg came... and they showed me that if there is one constant in this universe, it's death.
(beat)
Afterwards, I began to realize that none of it mattered. We're all going to die anyway. It's only a question of how and when. You will too, Captain. You might contract a fatal disease... you might die in battle...
(with meaning)
...or you might die of a heart attack in your own vineyard.

Picard freezes at this. Soran takes a couple of steps around him, now on the offensive.

(CONTINUED)

109 CONTINUED: (2) 109

SORAN
(continuing)
You look surprised. But you shouldn't be. I've been to the Nexus, Captain. I know things about people.
(beat)
Aren't you beginning to feel time gaining on you? It's like a predator. It's stalking you. You can try to outrun it with doctors... medicines... new technologies... But in the end, time is going to hunt you down... and make the kill.

This strikes home with Picard's own recent concerns... he struggles for a moment.

PICARD
We're all... mortal, Soran. It's one of the truths of our existence.

SORAN
What if I told you I found a <u>new</u> truth...

PICARD
The nexus.

SORAN
Time has no meaning there. The predator has no teeth.

Soran smiles -- he's driven.

SORAN
I was there... I know what's it like to live without the fear of dying. And nothing you do or say is going to stop me from getting back.

OFF Soran's determined face...

CUT TO:

110 INT. GEORDI'S QUARTERS 110

Geordi is changing his clothes, putting on a fresh uniform. He takes a deep breath and stretches, working out some kinks in his neck...

111 INT. KLINGON BATTLECRUISER - BRIDGE 111

Lursa and B'Etor are still watching Geordi's POV on the monitor. They are bored and irritable.

B'ETOR
I thought he was the Chief Engineer.

LURSA
He is.

B'ETOR
Then when is he going to Engineering?

The POV shows Geordi's view moving to a replicator slot. We see a large SANDWICH MATERIALIZE. Geordi's hand reaches out, picks it up... and brings it toward his mouth. Lursa and B'Etor gnash their teeth in frustration...

CUT TO:

112 EXT. SPACE - ENTERPRISE & KLINGON SHIP 112

The ships in orbit of Veridian Three, as before.

113 INT. BRIDGE 113

Riker, Worf, Data and Troi at their positions. The ship is still at Red Alert. Data reacts to something on his console.

DATA
Commander -- I am picking up a low-level subspace transmission from the Enterprise to the Klingon ship.

RIKER
(concerned)
Source?

Data works.

DATA
I am having difficulty pinpointing its origin.

As Data works...

CUT TO:

114 INT. KLINGON BATTLECRUISER - BRIDGE 114

B'Etor watching the monitor, impatient. The POV shows Geordi's view of walking down a CORRIDOR. Lursa walks over to join her.

LURSA
Where is he now?

B'ETOR
I don't know... he took a shower... then he went back to Sickbay... now he is roaming the ship... He must be the only Engineer in Starfleet who does not go to Engineering!

On the monitor, Geordi's POV turns a corner and ENTERS ENGINEERING. The two sisters lean forward with interest, watching intently. On the monitor, we see Farrell begin to talk to Geordi...

115 INT. ENGINEERING 115

Geordi and Farrell, N.D.s working in b.g. Mid-conversation.

FARRELL
I'd like to run a level three diagnostic on the port plasma relays. I think one of the generators is fluctuating.

GEORDI
Okay, let's do it.

They both move to consoles...

116 INT. KLINGON BATTLECRUISER - BRIDGE 116

As before. Lursa suddenly reacts to something on the screen.

LURSA
That's it!
(to B'Etor)
Replay from time index four-two-nine.

B'Etor works. The image on their monitor RUNS BACKWARD for a moment and then FREEZES. On the screen we can now see several of the monitors in Engineering. On the left side of the screen is the large cut-a-way view of the Enterprise. Lursa touches the diagram.

(CONTINUED)

116 CONTINUED: 116

LURSA
Magnify this section and enhance.

B'Etor works. The picture ZOOMS IN on the cut-a-way graphic and SHARPENS in FOCUS. There are several blocks of numbers and text visible. Lursa studies the image.

LURSA
(continuing)
Their shields are operating on a modulation of two-five-seven point four...

The sisters exchange an excited glance, then move toward the command area.

B'ETOR
(calls out)
Adjust our disruptor frequency to match -- two-five-seven point four!

The two sisters smile eagerly.

117 INT. ENTERPRISE BRIDGE 117

Data is working the console as Riker looks on.

DATA
The transmission is coming from Deck Thirty-six, Section Twenty-three Baker.

RIKER
Main Engineering?

WHAM! The ship is ROCKED HARD. ALARMS go off on the Bridge.

118 EXT. SPACE - ENTERPRISE AND KLINGON SHIP 118

The Klingon ship is FIRING FOUR DISRUPTORS at the Enterprise. The disruptors PASS DIRECTLY THROUGH the ship's SHIELDS and hit directly on the hull.

119 INT. ENTERPRISE BRIDGE 119

WHAM! Another HIT.

(CONTINUED)

119 CONTINUED: 119

WORF
(shocked)
They have found a way to penetrate our shields.

RIKER
Lock phasers and return fire!

120 EXT. SPACE - THE ENTERPRISE & KLINGON SHIP 120

The Enterprise FIRES at the battlecruiser... but the phaser shots are stopped by the Klingon SHIELDS, which FLASH ON when they're hit.

The battlecruiser returns FIRE. The shot carves a jagged TEAR in the Enterprise's hull.

121 INT. BRIDGE 121

As Before. The ship is jolted again... the Con console EXPLODES and the Con Officer is killed.

RIKER
(to Troi)
Deanna, take the helm. Get us out of orbit.

Troi rushes to the Con and works...

122 EXT. SPACE - THE ENTERPRISE & KLINGON SHIP 122

The Enterprise turns and leaves orbit, but the Klingon ship is right on top of them... FIRING at the defenseless starship.

123 INT. BRIDGE 123

A JOLT.

DATA
Hull breach on decks thirty-one through thirty-five.

The Klingon ship can be seen on the Viewscreen. The Klingons FIRE. Another JOLT. The Bridge lights FLICKER. The situation is desperate.

(CONTINUED)

123 CONTINUED: 123

RIKER
(urgent, to Worf)
Worf, that's an old Klingon ship. What do we know about it? Are there any weaknesses?

The ship is JOLTED. They all hold on.

WORF
It is a Class D-twelve battlecruiser. They were retired from service because of defective plasma coils.

RIKER
Plasma coils... is there any way we can use that to our advantage?

WORF
I do not see how. The plasma coil is part of their cloaking device...

Riker suddenly gets an inspiration as the Bridge is ROCKED.

RIKER
(to Data)
Could we access the defective coil and trigger their cloak?

DATA
Perhaps. If we sent a low level ionic pulse, it might reset the coil and engage the cloaking systems.

WORF
(onto the idea)
And with their cloak engaged their shields would drop.

RIKER
Right. Data, lock onto that plasma coil.

DATA
(confident)
No problem.

124 EXT. SPACE - THE ENTERPRISE & KLINGON SHIP 124

The Enterprise ROLLS and TURNS back toward the planet, tries to get away from the Klingon ship. But the battlecruiser follows its every move.

125 INT. BRIDGE 125

DATA
I have accessed their coil frequency... initiating ionic pulse...

The ship is HIT again. An aft CONSOLE EXPLODES.

RIKER
Make it quick!

126 INT. KLINGON BATTLECRUISER 126

Lursa and B'Etor in command... savoring their imminent victory.

LURSA
(to Helmsman)
Target their Bridge. Full disruptors.

The Helmsman suddenly reacts to something on his console.

KLINGON HELM
We are cloaking!

B'ETOR
What?

KLINGON HELM
Mistress -- our shields are down!

127 EXT. SPACE - THE KLINGON SHIP 127

The ship ENGAGES ITS CLOAK and DISAPPEARS.

128 INT. ENTERPRISE BRIDGE 128

RIKER
Fire torpedoes!

Worf works.

129 EXT. SPACE - THE ENTERPRISE 129

as it FIRES a large spread of TORPEDOES.

130 INT. KLINGON BATTLECRUISER 130

Lursa and B'Etor react to the sight on the Viewscreen as the spread of torpedoes heads directly for them. The two sisters exchange a look.

131 EXT. SPACE 131

An empty starfield... suddenly the photon torpedoes ENTER FRAME and EXPLODE. As they hit the unseen vessel, the CLOAK suddenly drops and the Klingon ship is visible again as it is torn apart by the torpedoes.

132 INT. ENTERPRISE BRIDGE 132

On the Viewscreen, the wounded Klingon ship is careening out of control.

WORF
Direct hit to their starboard nacelle. Their warp engines are overloading...

Suddenly the Klingon ship EXPLODES on the main viewer. Everyone reacts to the blinding light for a moment, then it's gone.

DATA
(excited)
YES!!

But in this moment of victory, the ship suddenly SHUDDERS again and the lights FLICKER.

133 INT. ENGINEERING 133

The room is a disaster. Wreckage from destroyed consoles and debris are scattered throughout the room. Geordi is desperately working with Engineers near the warp core, which is running faster and faster.

GEORDI
(to com)
La Forge to Bridge. I've got a problem down here. The magnetic interlocks have been ruptured. I need to get the --

(CONTINUED)

133 CONTINUED: 133

The warp core starts to spew white-hot GAS.

GEORDI
(continuing)
Coolant leak! Everybody out!

The emergency isolation door comes DOWN and people start rushing out of Engineering. Geordi heads for the Corridor.

GEORDI
(on the move, to com)
Bridge. We've got a new problem. We're about five minutes from a warp core breach. There's nothing I can do.

134 INT. BRIDGE 134

Riker is faced with a no-win situation. He makes the decision.

RIKER
(to Troi)
Deanna, evacuate everyone into the saucer section.
(to Data)
Mister Data, prepare to separate the ship.

Troi and Data work and Riker moves to the Captain's chair. He presses a button on the armchair console... a unique and urgent ALARM is heard throughout the ship.

135 INT. CORRIDORS, QUARTERS, ETC. SECTIONS - SERIES OF SHOTS 135

As the ALARM SOUNDS:

-- Crewmembers and civilians rushing through the Corridors.

-- Geordi directing people toward the correct doorways.

-- Parents grabbing their children and heading down the Corridor.

-- Beverly and a Nurse grab a wounded crewmember and pull him down the Corridor.

-- People scrambling through Jefferies Tubes and closing hatches behind them.

136 INT. BRIDGE 136

DATA
One minute to warp core breach.

TROI
(off console)
We've still got people on decks twenty-three and twenty-four.

WORF
(to Riker)
We must separate now, sir.

TROI
Just a little more time, Wil.

DATA
Forty-five seconds to warp core breach.

Riker waits...

137 INT. JEFFERIES TUBE 137

People scramble through the Tube and out into a Corridor. Geordi is the last man through the hatch. He turns and manually SHUTS the hatch behind him.

GEORDI
(hits combadge)
That's it, Bridge -- we're all out!

138 INT. BRIDGE 138

RIKER
(to Data)
Begin separation sequence.
(to Troi)
Full impulse power once we're clear.

Data works.

139 EXT. SPACE - THE ENTERPRISE 139

LOOKING FORWARD from behind the REAR of the massive ship. A CRACK appears as the separation process begins...

140 SIDE VIEW 140

As the gap starts to widen... retention assemblies begin to unlock... the massive mechanisms release their grip upon each other...

141 INT. BRIDGE 141

Everyone is watching the VIEWSCREEN which shows a view of the battle section as seen from the saucer... the gap between the two sections widens... jets of VAPOR are released as the hydraulic connections are broken.

142 EXT. SPACE - BOTH SHIPS 142

A full shot showing both sections. The saucer RISES ABOVE the crippled battle section.

143 INT. BRIDGE 143

DATA
Separation complete.

TROI
Engaging impulse engines.

144 EXT. SPACE - THE SAUCER SECTION 144

Moves away from the battle section... but before it can completely escape, the battle section EXPLODES -- the force of the explosion HITS the saucer section, knocking it toward the planet.

145 INT. BRIDGE 145

Everyone is knocked to their feet.

RIKER
Report.

TROI
Helm controls are off-line!

They all look at the Viewscreen... the planet is rushing toward them.

146 CLOSE ON DATA 146

as he reacts to the terrifying image.

(CONTINUED)

146 CONTINUED: 146

DATA
Oh, shit.

147 EXT. SPACE - THE SAUCER SECTION 147

PLUMMETS into the planet's atmosphere.

148 INT. BRIDGE 148

The ship is shaking and rolling VIOLENTLY. Everyone hanging on for dear life.

149 EXT. PLANET'S ATMOSPHERE - THE SAUCER SECTION 149

Hurtles toward the ground below. The metal on the underside of the hull begins to GLOW bright RED... then WHITE HOT from the friction... the saucer jigs and shudders as it is buffeted by the atmosphere.

150 INT. BRIDGE 150

The ground is getting closer on the Viewscreen.

DATA
(off console)
I have rerouted auxiliary power to the lateral thrusters... attempting to level our descent...

RIKER
(to com)
All hands brace for impact!

151 EXT. PLANET'S ATMOSPHERE - THE SAUCER SECTION 151

The leading edge of the huge saucer TILTS UPWARD slightly... and then it HITS the surface... the saucer begins to PLOW THROUGH the dense rain forest: we see a huge WALL of metal CRASHING through the jungle, uprooting trees... dirt flying... birds flying out of the way... an enormous scene of destruction as it tears through the foliage...

152 INT. BRIDGE 152

People are being flung about like toys. Every light on the ship goes OUT in the crash.

(CONTINUED)

152 CONTINUED: 152

The ship continues to jump and shake... then finally comes to a STOP.

There is a long quiet beat... then people begin to stir in the darkened room.

153 ANGLE ON RIKER 153

who is lying face down on the deck near the command area. He catches his breath, then rolls over on his back into... SUNLIGHT. He shields his eyes... looks up at the ceiling and reacts...

154 RIKER'S POV 154

The sun is shining in through the overhead window on the top of the Bridge.

155 EXT. PLANET SURFACE - THE ENTERPRISE (WIDE SHOT) 155

The saucer has come to a stop in the middle of a RAIN FOREST. The passage of the saucer has gouged a long trail through the rain forest behind the ship. Off this startling sight...

CUT TO:

156 EXT. JUNGLE CLEARING - DAY 156

Picard and Soran, as before. Soran snaps shut his watch. He pulls out a Klingon communicator.

SORAN
Well, Captain, I have an appointment with eternity... and I don't want to be late.
(to com)
This is Soran. Transport me to the intersect point.

A beat goes by -- no response. Soran frowns.

SORAN
(to com)
Soran to Lursa. Do you read me?

Nothing.

(CONTINUED)

156 CONTINUED: 156

PICARD
It would seem you're going to be late, after all.

Soran pulls out Picard's communicator.

SORAN
(taps combadge)
Soran to Enterprise.
(no response)
Enterprise respond, or I will kill Captain Picard.

Silence. Soran realizes something is wrong. He whips out his watch, glances at it... looks toward the distant mountain peak...

As soon as Soran looks away, Picard makes a BREAK for the jungle. Soran turns and FIRES the disruptor, barely missing Picard as he disappears into the dense foliage.

Soran steps toward him to follow... then hesitates, looks back at the mountain. He holsters the weapon, turns and takes off toward the distant mountaintop...

157 ANGLE ON PICARD 157

hiding in the jungle. He sees Soran head across the clearing, then glances up at the mountain... realizes that must be the intersect point. He FOLLOWS Soran...

CUT TO:

158 INT. ENTERPRISE - CORRIDOR 158

Wreckage everywhere. All the lights are off, bulkheads have been blown out, optical cabling and circuitry hang from the ceiling. (NOTE: None of the ship's lights, systems, or doors will work from this point on.)

Data, Beverly, and Ogawa are looking through the wreckage for survivors, all holding palm beacons. Data and Beverly scan with tricorders; Ogawa has a medical kit. Beverly moves to a fallen bulkhead.

BEVERLY
(off tricorder)
Wait... someone's under here.
(to Data)
Data...

(CONTINUED)

158 CONTINUED: 158

Data LIFTS the fallen bulkhead with ANDROID STRENGTH and tosses it aside, revealing an injured and unconscious crewmember underneath. Beverly immediately moves to his aid.

BEVERLY
(continuing, off tricorder)
Severe concussion... some internal bleeding...
(to Ogawa)
Ten ccs inoprovaline.

Ogawa injects him with a hypospray.

OGAWA
His vital signs are stabilizing, Doctor.

BEVERLY
(hits combadge)
Crusher to Sickbay. I have a cranial trauma on Deck Seven, Section Twenty-three Alpha. Send Doctor Selar and a field surgical unit.

MEDICAL COM VOICE
Aye, Doctor.

Ogawa gets to work on the crewmember. Beverly stands, pulls out her tricorder. She and Data move further down the corridor, searching for more wounded. Beverly suddenly points toward an intersection that is blocked off by debris.

BEVERLY
Over here, Data. One life sign, very faint.

Data moves to the debris and quickly begins to PULL it aside. He works for a moment.

159 ANGLE ON DEBRIS 159

as Data pulls aside a large piece of plating, revealing SPOT THE CAT sitting in the wreckage. She looks at Data and gives a plaintive MEOW.

DATA
Spot.

(CONTINUED)

159 CONTINUED: 159

He picks up the cat and holds it close, stroking its fur. The cat purrs happily.

DATA
(continuing)
I am very happy to find you, Spot.

Beverly smiles.

BEVERLY
That's one family reunited.

Data turns, revealing that there are tears in his eyes. Beverly is surprised and touched at the sight.

BEVERLY
(continuing)
Data... are you all right?

DATA
I am not sure, Doctor. I am happy to see Spot... and yet I am crying. My emotional program must be malfunctioning again.

Beverly puts a gentle hand on him.

BEVERLY
No, Data... I think it's working perfectly.

Data looks up at her and smiles through his tears. Off the image of Data cuddling his cat.

CUT TO:

160 EXT. ENTERPRISE/JUNGLE - CLOSE ON HATCH - DAY 160

There's a WHIRRING sound... then a metal CLANG. The hatch opens outward with a WHOOSH of air. Riker, Geordi and Worf step outside into the sunlight. They look around.

161 REVEAL THE SETTING 161

They have just come out the side of the Saucer Section, which towers behind them, the hull stretching up and away offcamera. They are standing on the ground. The ship is half-buried in the ground and dense underbrush. Some trees and have been knocked over, but the forest is still dense and alive. Strange, alien noises in the air.

(CONTINUED)

161 CONTINUED: 161

They turn and look at the immense crashed ship.

GEORDI
(off tricorder)
Massive structural damage... metal fatigue... multiple hull breaches... the entire Starfleet Engineering Corps couldn't get her off the ground.

Riker points to a series of rungs that form a ladder set into the hull a short distance away.

RIKER
Looks like we can reach the main Shuttlebay from there...

Riker grabs hold of the rungs and starts climbing. The others follow...

CUT TO:

162 INT. MAIN SHUTTLEBAY - DAY 162

Riker, Geordi and Worf ENTER through the open spacedoor. They look around the massive hangar in astonishment. The bay is HEAVILY DAMAGED. Cracks in bulkheads, wiring hanging down. A single SHUTTLE is in the empty room, and it has been slammed against a far bulkhead and looks damaged.

RIKER
(dismayed)
The hangar door was ripped open... the other shuttles must've been pulled out during descent.

They examine the remaining shuttlecraft.

GEORDI
(off tricorder)
The engines are pretty badly damaged... looks like the computer system is too...

RIKER
If we could get this thing working... could we use it to find Soran -- try and stop him?

GEORDI
We'd have to perform a low-level search, and that could take days.

(CONTINUED)

162 CONTINUED: 162

WORF
Soran is going to destroy the star in less than three hours.

A grim beat. Riker looks at the shuttle.

RIKER
Then we'll use the shuttle to get as many children out of here as we can.

As they look at the small shuttlecraft...

CUT TO:

163 EXT. JUNGLE - DAY - SERIES OF SHOTS 163

-- Soran quickly making his way through the brush, a difficult task...

-- Picard doggedly following Soran...

-- Soran turns and looks behind him -- we get a glimpse of Picard not far away. He pulls his Klingon disruptor and FIRES.

-- Picard dives behind some foliage, dodging the blast. Another blast, this time closer. He looks to either side, hunting for another way up. He decides to circle around -- starts making his way by a different route...

CUT TO:

164 EXT. ENTERPRISE/JUNGLE - DAY 164

The hatch seen earlier is open. Engineering N.D.s carry equipment out of the hatch and haul it up the ladder. Worf emerges from the hatch and speaks to someone behind him.

WORF
Watch your step.

A group of PARENTS and CHILDREN come out of the hatch. The children's faces are scared, holding tight to the hands of their parents, who are obviously grief-stricken and terrified at the fate that waits before them.

Riker and Geordi follow them out from the hatch, mid-conversation.

(CONTINUED)

164 CONTINUED: 164

GEORDI
We're stripping components out of what's left of the main computer. I think I can use them on the shuttle.

RIKER
What about the engines?

GEORDI
They're going to take a little more work.

Suddenly, PHASER FIRE comes whipping out of the jungle. The shots BLAST against the hull, destroying equipment and sending everybody diving for cover.

Worf and Riker pull their phasers and FIRE back.

RIKER
Geordi, get those kids back inside!

Geordi scrambles over to the children and parents, begins heading them back toward the hatch.

Two Security Guards rush outside. One of them is immediately SHOT DEAD. The other takes up a position on the ground near Riker and Worf, who continue to EXCHANGE SHOTS with the unseen assailants in the jungle. After a few beats, the fire from the jungle STOPS.

GEORDI
What are they waiting for?

WORF
They may be trying to establish a different line of fire.

A long moment... then Riker makes a decision.

RIKER
I'm going to go talk to them.

WORF
Sir. They will kill you.

RIKER
When Soran destroys that star, we're all dead anyway.

Riker carefully puts his phaser down and slowly stands up, with his hands clearly in the air.

(CONTINUED)

164 CONTINUED: (2) 164

No phaser bolts come out of the jungle, so Riker walks toward the treeline as Worf and the other Enterprise officers tense...

165 EXT. JUNGLE NEAR ENTERPRISE - DAY 165

As Riker approaches the treeline. Suddenly, Lursa steps out and aims a disruptor at Riker.

LURSA
That's far enough, Commander.

Riker reacts to the sight of Lursa... he glances up and can now see B'Etor and EIGHT KLINGON GUARDS in the underbrush.

RIKER
I see you made it to your escape pods...

LURSA
We must leave this planet. You will give us one of your shuttlecraft.

Riker looks at her for a moment... this is not going to be a simple discussion.

RIKER
I think... we need to have a talk.

Off his weary expression...

CUT TO:

166 INT. TEN FORWARD 166

The entire front of the room has been DESTROYED on impact -- trees, rocks, dirt and jungle foliage spill in through what used to be the large windows. Furniture is overturned.

A small area has been cleared, where Lursa and B'Etor face off with Riker, Worf and Troi. Mid-argument.

RIKER
If you tell us where Soran is, we can stop him. We can save everyone.

(CONTINUED)

166 CONTINUED: 166

B'ETOR
There is no time. Give us a shuttlecraft.

RIKER
That's not possible. Only one shuttle survived the crash.

TROI
(to Lursa)
And we're using it to evacuate some of the children.

B'ETOR
(sneers)
How noble.

Lursa thinks for a moment, then gets a crafty look on her face.

LURSA
I suggest a compromise. We will take the shuttle... our eight men... and as many children as you can load in the ship.

RIKER
No deal.

LURSA
As I see it, you have no choice. If you attempt to launch the shuttle without us, we will shoot it down.
(beat)
And none of your precious children will get off this planet.

OFF Riker's face...

CUT TO:

167 INT. OBSERVATION LOUNGE - DAY 167

Riker, Data, Worf, Geordi, Troi and Beverly.

BEVERLY
I won't sacrifice a single child for those bitches.

(CONTINUED)

167 CONTINUED: 167

RIKER
Agreed.
(beat)
Geordi, is there any way to rig a deflector shield to protect the shuttle. Keep them from firing on it?

GEORDI
Not without a field generator. That would take a day, at least.

RIKER
(to Troi)
Did you sense anything from Lursa or B'Etor? Doubt... weaknesses we could use to our advantage?

TROI
None that I could tell. They're very determined. And they're prepared to back up their threats.
(thinks)
But there was something else... an intense emotion, just beneath the surface, like background noise in a room. It was... passion.

RIKER
That's understandable, their lives <u>are</u> at stake...

TROI
No. Not that kind of passion... more like... desire.

RIKER
As in sexual desire?

TROI
Yes.

BEVERLY
In the middle of a crisis?

TROI
(nods)
It was very much on their minds.

WORF
I have had experience with the sisters. It is during times of danger that they are most... aroused.
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

167 CONTINUED: (2) 167

WORF (Cont'd)
(gets an idea)
They might respond to a more... personal approach.

BEVERLY
(to Worf)
You're not seriously suggesting that someone try to seduce them...

RIKER
At this point, I'm willing to try anything.

Riker starts to get up, but Worf gently restrains him.

WORF
No offense, Commander... but you would not survive the experience.

RIKER
Oh?

WORF
No sir. And they detest me.

Riker thinks for a moment... then he is struck by an idea. He slowly turns to Data. Gradually everyone understands and they all turn toward Data. PUSH IN on Data, who looks back at them innocently.

CUT TO:

168 INT. TEN FORWARD - DAY 168

Lursa and B'Etor are impatiently waiting in the wrecked room. Data ENTERS. His every move and gesture are unandroid-like. He is suave, seductive -- Valentino. He approaches the sisters, who eye him with suspicion. B'Etor is framed by sunlight streaming in through the window.

DATA
(with passion)
But soft! What light through yonder window breaks? It is the East, and B'Etor is the sun!

Lursa and B'Etor exchange a shocked look -- what the hell is this? Data walks over and dramatically puts his arm around B'Etor's waist, pulls her close, passion and fire in his face.

(CONTINUED)

168 CONTINUED: 168

DATA
Come to me... my little garlic muffin.

Data kisses her. They part. B'Etor's expression changes from confusion to fascination...

CUT TO:

169 INT. OBSERVATION LOUNGE - DAY 169

Everyone waiting, anxious. Finally, Data ENTERS. His normally perfect hair is mussed... he limps... and his uniform is scratched and torn. He has a slightly odd expression on his face. Everyone looks to him.

DATA
I believe I have opened negotiations.

His arm FALLS OFF and hits the floor. Circuits dangle from his shoulder. OFF Data's unperturbed expression...

CUT TO:

170 EXT. PLANET SURFACE - THE ENTERPRISE (WIDE SHOT) 170

As seen before -- the Saucer in the jungle.

171 INT. SHUTTLECRAFT - DAY 171

CLOSE ON MONITOR, which shows a MAP of the planet surface -- forest, oceans and mountain ranges visible. Lursa's hand points to features as she talks.

LURSA'S VOICE
We beamed Soran to this peninsula on the southernmost continent. The intersect point is somewhere on this mountain range.

MOVE TO REVEAL Riker listening to Lursa.

RIKER
Can't you be more precise?

LURSA
The transporter logs were destroyed with our ship.

(CONTINUED)

171 CONTINUED: 171

RIKER
Then we'll have to do a low-level aerial search.

LURSA
There's only one hour left. You'll never find him.

RIKER
It's worth a try.
(beat)
I'm going to send Worf, Data, eleven children... and the two of you on the shuttle. If you don't find Soran in time... Worf has orders to leave the system and take you to the nearest starbase.

LURSA
You are not coming?

RIKER
I'll stay with my ship.

Lursa nods... she has a new-found grudging respect for Riker.

CUT TO:

172 INT. MAIN SHUTTLEBAY - DAY 172

Geordi has Data's head OPEN and is removing some circuits.

Suddenly:

B'ETOR'S VOICE
What are you doing?

They turn as B'Etor strides up to them, looking at Data with alarm.

DATA
He needs to integrate my positronic capacitors into the shuttle's computer. It will require some... disassembly.

B'ETOR
(to Geordi, a threat)
Do not use all his parts.

(CONTINUED)

172 CONTINUED: 172

OFF Data's neutral face...

CUT TO:

173 EXT. MOUNTAINTOP - DAY 173

The top of the mountain is a small plateau, ringed with trees and underbrush. A single ROCKFACE juts upward, forming a backdrop for the plateau. Against the rockface, a large SCAFFOLDING has been erected -- planks and beams forming a complex structure -- ladders connect each level. It leads to a narrow ledge a dozen meters above. A small but distinct "X" has been carved into the rock at a specific point.

Soran emerges from the jungle onto the plateau, dirty and bedraggled from the climb. He looks around, disruptor in-hand. No one here. He's beaten Picard to the summit.

He holsters the weapon and moves quickly to a clump of bushes. He pulls them aside, uncovering a PROBE LAUNCHER -- a cylindrical apparatus the size of a small car. He checks the control panel. Alien graphics and numbers are ticking by on the screen... obviously a countdown in progress.

Soran glances up at the distant sun, brushes some dirt off of his pants, and then begins to CLIMB the scaffolding... gets a few levels up...

A FOOT SMASHES down into Soran's face from the next level up --

174 INCLUDE PICARD 174

who has been hiding on the scaffolding, waiting. Soran quickly recovers, grabs Picard's leg and nearly pulls him off the platform. A quick FIGHT ensues:

Both men SLAM onto a single platform, fighting desperately. Picard is knocked off his feet -- happens to look up into the sky. He sees something --

175 PICARD'S POV - THE SKY 175

The ENERGY RIBBON can be seen in the distant sky -- a bizarre snake of color streaking across the deep blue sky. Time is almost up.

176 RESUME ACTION 176

-- Picard avoids a vicious kick from Soran, glances down at the probe launcher, realizes he's got one chance. He LEAPS down off the scaffolding, hitting the ground hard, rolls to his feet, runs toward the probe launcher.

-- Soran FIRES his disruptor at Picard, the blast hitting the ground by his feet, KNOCKING him forward to the ground.

-- A THUNDEROUS ROAR makes Picard jerk his head up off the ground in time to see:

-- The launcher FIRES THE PROBE into the sky.

-- The plateau is suddenly quiet as the probe streaks toward the distant SUN and disappears from view. Picard gets to his knees, stares after the probe, shocked. He's failed.

-- They watch the sun for a silent moment, waiting...

177 THE SUN 177

begins to DARKEN and COLLAPSE, as seen before.

178 RESUME PLATEAU 178

the scene DARKENS as the sun goes out... and NIGHT FALLS on the planet.

Soran, a look of profound elation on his face, makes his way to the top of the scaffolding. He stands on the ledge in front of the carved "X" and looks into the sky.

179 ANGLE ON ENERGY RIBBON 179

Now a bright slash of color against the starry blackness. The course of the Ribbon has changed... it is now heading directly for the planet... getting closer by the second...

180 PICARD 180

gets to his feet and stares at the onrushing Ribbon, the wind whipping up on the plateau. He backs away at the sight, coming to a stop with his back against the scaffolding. There's nowhere to run...

181 NEW ANGLE - THE PLATEAU 181

as the RIBBON OF ENERGY TEARS ACROSS THE SCENE IN A TERRIFYING TORRENT OF LIGHT AND SOUND. THE SCENE IS WASHED OUT BY A BLINDING FLOOD OF RED LIGHT... Then suddenly the Ribbon is GONE... and so are Picard and Soran. The plateau is strangely and utterly SILENT after the passage of the Ribbon... even the birds have stopped chirping in the trees.

182 EXT. SPACE - VERIDIAN THREE 182

As a HUGE SHOCKWAVE from the destroyed star HITS the planet and begins to DESTROY it. A series of quick cuts:

183 EXT. PLANET'S SURFACE - THE ENTERPRISE (WIDE SHOT) 183

The SHOCKWAVE is TEARING through the planet, OBLITERATING everything in its path, heading directly for the crashed Saucer Section in the jungle.

184 INT. TEN FORWARD 184

Riker, Troi, Beverly, Ogawa and some N.D.s are watching in horror the oncoming wall of destruction through the windows. In the blink of an eye, the SHOCKWAVE CRASHES through Ten Forward, VAPORIZING everything in its path with a violent wash of heat and light.

185 EXT. SPACE - VERIDIAN THREE 185

The planet EXPLODES in a blast of fiery debris -- completely destroyed.

CUT TO:

186 CLOSE ON PICARD 186

lying on his back. He opens his eyes, dazed, not sure what's happened to him. He sits up...

187 REVEAL SCENE 187

Picard is sitting on a VAST AND WINDSWEPT PLAIN -- utterly desolate, the sky is a bizarre and alien reddish color.

(CONTINUED)

187 CONTINUED: 187

WE ARE INSIDE THE NEXUS.

Picard looks around. Soran is getting up off his feet. The obsessive, driven quality is gone from his face. His eyes fix on a distant point.

Picard stands and follows his gaze.

188 A MAN 188

is approaching from across the plain. Soran smiles in relief. The pocket watch drops from his hand into the dust... and he walks to meet the man. Picard watches, fascinated.

The man's features become visible -- it's another DOCTOR SORAN (with no facial scar). The two Sorans walk inexorably toward each other... and they MERGE into one solitary figure. A single Soran stands on the plain.

The new Soran turns to Picard... and gives him a smile that is neither triumphant nor mocking... but simply peaceful. Soran walks away. Picard watches him for a moment, then he suddenly hears a BOY'S VOICE.

ROBERT'S VOICE
(o.c.)
Come on, Johnny. Let's go.

Picard turns at the sound...

189 INT. WINE CELLAR - CONTINUOUS 189

Picard is suddenly standing in a traditional wine cellar with casks of wine, stacks of bottles, various pieces of wine-making equipment -- everything is "non-technical", wine being made the old-fashioned way. The room is dark and musty. A twelve year-old boy is standing near a cask of wine -- this is ROBERT -- Picard's older brother. He is holding a 24th century flashlight next to a cask with a spigot attached. Robert is agitated.

PICARD
(shocked)
Robert...

ROBERT
(loud whisper)
Keep your voice down! Someone'll hear us. Now get over here.

(CONTINUED)

189 CONTINUED: 189

Picard looks down and notices that he is holding two wine glasses in his hands. He feels compelled to move to Robert and he automatically puts one of the glasses under the spigot... Robert opens the valve and some red wine pours into the glass.

ROBERT
(continuing, whisper)
All right, that's enough. Now the other one.

Picard switches glasses as Robert darts a furtive look over his shoulder. Robert shuts off the spigot after partially filling the second glass.

ROBERT
(continuing)
Don't spill a drop. Follow me.

Picard is drawn into the scene... as if he is really in this moment in his childhood. He follows Robert through the cellar. Robert moves aside a cask, takes a board off the wall and reveals a hidden passage. Robert shuts OFF the flashlight and crawls inside and Picard follows him.

190 INT. CELLAR HIDING PLACE - CONTINUOUS 190

A small, cramped space. Robert and Picard scramble into the room. Robert suddenly LIGHTS a candle, revealing the room: the floor is dirt, the walls are a patchwork of scraps of wood and odd materials... a small beat-up computer sits in one corner... jars of insects and reptiles are strewn about. This is clearly a young boy's secret hideout.

Robert lights a couple more candles, giving the room a warm almost magical glow. Picard stares at his brother in wonder as Robert takes one of the glasses and smiles as he examines the wine next to the light.

ROBERT
You know what this is, Johnny?

PICARD
(remembering)
Father's prize vintage... the 'ninety-six Chateau Picard.

ROBERT
That's right... and he'd <u>kill</u> us if he knew we'd taken any.

(CONTINUED)

190 CONTINUED: 190

Picard looks around... he's drawn to this place, this time... Robert is playing the role of the "wine connoisseur" for his young brother... showing off a little.

ROBERT
(continuing)
We need to let this breathe...

He sets down the wine glass and Picard follows suit. They sit back for a beat. Robert is milking the moment... he's king of this castle...

ROBERT
(continuing)
So what do you think?

PICARD
About what?

ROBERT
(a little annoyed)
My secret room.

Picard smiles and looks around as if for the first time.

PICARD
Oh, yes. It's... smaller than I remember.

ROBERT
(annoyed)
What? You've been in here?

PICARD
(quickly)
No. I meant to say... it's smaller than I imagined..

ROBERT
(preening)
Father has no idea that it's here. And if you're very good, I might let you visit once in a while.

PICARD
(remembering, quiet)
No... you won't.

Robert ignores him and lights another candle.

(CONTINUED)

190 CONTINUED: (2) 190

PICARD
Robert... I never thanked you for bringing me here. It meant a great deal to me.

Robert, like all youths, is uncomfortable with open displays of sentiment... he shrugs awkwardly.

ROBERT
Ordinarily I wouldn't... but this time I thought... after what you did for me... you know, with Father...

PICARD
I didn't want you to get into trouble... you're my brother.

Robert is very uncomfortable and breaks the moment.

ROBERT
Bread! We need bread to properly clear our palates. I'll be right back.
(threatening)
Don't touch anything.

Robert scrambles out through the passageway. Picard is left alone for the moment... he looks around the child's hideaway and tries to figure out what's happening.

GUINAN'S VOICE
Is something wrong?

Picard turns and we --

191 EXT. WINDSWEPT ALIEN PLAIN - CONTINUOUS 191

Picard is on the plain as before, except now Guinan is standing before him. She is wearing the same outfit seen in the beginning of the movie on the Enterprise-B.

Picard is stunned.

PICARD
Guinan... what are you doing here? I thought you were on the Enterprise.

(CONTINUED)

191 CONTINUED: 191

GUINAN
I am on the Enterprise... I am also here.
(off his puzzled look)
Think of me as... an "echo" of the person you know... a part of her she left behind...

PICARD
Left behind...?

GUINAN
When the Enterprise-B beamed us off the Lakul, we were partially in the nexus. The transporters locked onto us... but somehow everyone left a part of themselves behind.

PICARD
Soran's duplicate...

GUINAN
...was his echo.

Picard looks around at the bleak landscape.

PICARD
A few moments ago... I was back on Earth, with my brother. Why?

GUINAN
You tell me.

Picard looks at her, remembering, then --

192 INT. CELLAR HIDING PLACE 192

As seen before. Picard is sitting in the empty room. Except now, Guinan is sitting there too. The memories come flooding back to Picard.

GUINAN
This was a special place to you.

PICARD
Very. I only saw it once.

Picard takes a beat... the memory touches something inside of him. He smiles gently.

(CONTINUED)

192 CONTINUED: 192

PICARD
(continuing)
I was eight years old... it was late September and I'd just come back from school. Robert had taken apart one of Father's antique clocks and couldn't put it back together properly.
(beat)
Father was furious. I knew he would be harsher on Robert than me... so I took the blame.

GUINAN
Pretty brave for an eight year old.

PICARD
Robert thought so. Later that day, he brought me here.

Robert scrambles back into the room, carrying some bread. Picard looks at him with fondness... overwhelmed by the emotion of the moment.

PICARD
(continuing)
It was the one time I felt he cared about me... the one time I truly felt we were brothers.
(beat)
It was one of the happiest moments I can remember...

Robert lifts a glass of wine.

ROBERT
Long life.

But the words remind Picard of reality... he lowers his glass without drinking from it. The moment's been broken.

GUINAN
Time has no meaning here. This moment could last as long as you want...

Picard puts the glass down with great reluctance.

PICARD
No. This moment was over a long time ago.

(CONTINUED)

192 CONTINUED: (2) 192

Picard turns to Guinan --

193 EXT. WINDSWEPT ALIEN PLAIN - CONTINUOUS 193

As before, Picard and Guinan.

GUINAN
Maybe there's some other day you'd like to relive?

PICARD
No.
(beat)
Guinan, I have to leave the nexus.

GUINAN
Why would you want to leave?

PICARD
(insistent)
I have to.

GUINAN
Okay. Where would you like to go?

PICARD
What do you mean?

GUINAN
If you leave the nexus you could go any place, any time. Maybe you'd like to live in the Golden Age of Egypt? Or the Tarquin Dynasty before it fell two million years ago? Maybe Elizabethan England... look up Shakespeare. You could even go to the future...

Picard realizes the opportunity before him.

PICARD
I know exactly where I want to go... and when. Back to that mountaintop on Veridian Three... before Soran put out the star. I have to stop him.

GUINAN
What makes you think things will be different this time?

(CONTINUED)

193 CONTINUED: 193

PICARD
You're right... I'll need help.
(beat)
Guinan, will you come back with me? Together, we could --

GUINAN
I can't leave. I'm already there, remember?

Picard looks crestfallen for a moment. Guinan gives him an enigmatic smile.

GUINAN
(continuing)
But I know just the guy.

A HORSE WHINNIES from offscreen. Picard turns at the sound --

194 INT. BARN - DAY - CONTINUOUS 194

Picard finds himself standing in the doorway of a wooden barn. Straw on the floor... farm implements on the walls... sunlight streaming in through the slats. Guinan is gone.

There are stalls in the barn, with a few HORSES visible. But in the far stall, one horse is being groomed by a MAN who stands on the opposite side of the horse -- we cannot see his face.

Picard walks to the stall... and notices an old Starfleet uniform jacket hung on a post. Picard reaches out and examines the rank insignia. He eyes the man on the far side of the horse.

PICARD
Captain...?

The man stands up...

195 REVEAL JAMES T. KIRK 195

as the man grooming the horse. The two Captains of the Starship Enterprise look at each other for the first time. A silent beat goes by, then --

KIRK
Who the hell are you?

(CONTINUED)

195 CONTINUED: 195

PICARD
Captain Jean-Luc Picard... of the Starship Enterprise.

Kirk reacts. He smiles, ironic.

KIRK
James T. Kirk... Starship Enterprise.
(beat)
Did Spock send you?

PICARD
No. Almost eighty years have passed since you were lost aboard the Enterprise-B.

Kirk turns his attention to the horse, begins to place a saddle and bridle on the horse. But Picard is here for a reason.

PICARD
(continuing)
I need your help, Captain. You must leave the nexus with me.

KIRK
Leave? What for?

PICARD
We have to go back to a planet called Veridian Three and stop a man from destroying a star.

Kirk seems unimpressed by this.

PICARD
(continuing)
There are millions of lives at stake.

KIRK
Sounds familiar.
(beat)
I think I'll pass.

PICARD
(surprised)
What?

KIRK
I'll pass. Find someone else.

(CONTINUED)

195 CONTINUED: (2) 195

PICARD
What are you going to do... just stay here... in this illusion?

KIRK
You bet.

PICARD
Don't you feel any sense of moral --

Kirk turns to Picard.

KIRK
(hard)
Look. I was out saving the galaxy when your grandfather was still in diapers. And frankly, I think the galaxy owes me one.

Kirk puts his uniform jacket on and takes the horse by the bridle and starts to lead it out of the stall. Picard's voice turns angry.

PICARD
I find it hard to believe that a Captain of the Enterprise would be willing to settle for some second-hand fantasy.

Kirk stops and turns on Picard.

KIRK
(hard)
I don't need to be lectured by you. I've spent most of my life one step ahead of disaster... I've watched good friends die... watched others come close... and you know what? I'm sick of it. I'm tired of having to come up with new ways to cheat death.
(beat)
Here... I've not only cheated death. I've won.

Kirk swings up into the saddle.

KIRK
(continuing)
So you go save the galaxy this time. I'm going for a ride.

(CONTINUED)

195 CONTINUED: (3) 195

Kirk rides out of the barn. Picard looks after him for a moment, then looks at one of the other horses in the barn... he makes a decision and then moves toward a saddle hanging on the wall...

CUT TO:

196 EXT. COUNTRYSIDE - DAY 196

Kirk is riding his horse hard across a field. He stops and looks back at one point and sees Picard following him on another horse. Kirk smiles to himself and decides to lead him on a chase.

197 SERIES OF SHOTS 197

As Kirk leads Picard on a hard chase over the rolling countryside... over a fence... through a thicket of trees... across a stream... they're both good riders.

Finally Kirk heads toward a small RAVINE directly ahead... Kirk urges his horse faster and faster... they reach the edge and the horse LEAPS across the chasm, safely reaching the other side. Kirk reins his horse to a stop and turns to watch Picard.

Picard heads for the ravine... and he also makes the daring LEAP. The two men bring their mounts close to each other as they both catch their breath.

KIRK
Not bad. I thought I lost you back there.

PICARD
(smiles)
It was quite a chase.

Kirk smiles back and they both swing down off their horses. Picard looks down at the ravine.

PICARD
(continuing)
I must admit, this jump did give me pause.

KIRK
I used to make that jump all the time when I was a kid.
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

197 CONTINUED: 197

KIRK (Cont'd)
(looks around)
I spent my summers right over there on my uncle's farm. I'd ride out across the field... then up along the riverbank... and I'd always end with this jump. I must've done it a hundred times... always scared the hell out of me.

Picard considers this for a moment.

PICARD
Tell me, Captain... how did it feel <u>today</u>?
(off his look)
Did it scare the hell out of you today?

KIRK
Not really... of course that was a long time ago... I was a lot younger then.

PICARD
Is that the only difference? Or is it something more?

KIRK
What's your point?

PICARD
As your horse leapt into the air... and you clutched the reins in your hands... didn't you find something was missing? Wasn't the urgency gone? Didn't it all seem a little... hollow?

Kirk can't deny what he's saying... and it troubles him.

KIRK
Maybe... a little.

Picard continues to press him.

PICARD
Don't you see... the one thing that made that jump special when you were a boy was the possibility that you might fall off that horse and break your neck. But now that risk is gone.

(CONTINUED)

197 CONTINUED: (2) 197

As Picard talks to Kirk he's also talking to himself... Kirk's concerns about mortality echo his own.

PICARD
(continuing)
Someone once told me that time is a predator that stalks us all our lives. But maybe time is also a companion... who goes with us on our journey, and reminds us to cherish the moments of our lives... because they will never come again.
(beat)
If there's one thing that makes us truly human, it's the knowledge that in the end, we can't cheat death.

There is a long beat as Kirk takes this all in... and then Kirk laughs. Picard gives him a look.

KIRK
I was just wondering what Spock would say if he were here... something about it being illogical to want to live forever.

PICARD
I've found the Ambassador to be very observant about human behavior.

Kirk reacts.

KIRK
Spock's an Ambassador? What have things come to?
(beat)
I can see I'm needed in your century.

He slaps his horse on the rump, and the horse trots off on its own.

KIRK
(continuing)
What was the name of that planet... Veridian Three?

PICARD
Yes.

Picard sends his own horse on its way.

(CONTINUED)

197 CONTINUED: (3) 197

KIRK
I take it the situation is grim, and the odds are against us?

PICARD
You could say that.

KIRK
(with a smile)
Sounds like fun.

The two men walk away across the fields. And as they walk, a ROAR OF COLOR AND SOUND WASHES OUT THE SCREEN, as seen before --

FADE TO RED.

FADE IN:

198 EXT. MOUNTAINTOP - CLOSE ON SCAFFOLDING - DAY 198

Picard and Kirk are perched on one of the upper-levels of the scaffolding, the same position where Picard was hiding earlier. The sun is shining.

We are reliving the same events as before, a few minutes before Soran puts out the star.

Picard and Kirk watch as Soran enters the clearing below... pulls out his disruptor and looks around... then holsters it and moves to uncover the probe launcher from the brush.

PICARD
(sotto)
After he checks the launcher, he's going to brush off his pants and then move to the scaffolding. I'll surprise him as I did before... when I've got his attention, you get to the launcher and disable it.

Kirk looks at Soran.

KIRK
He's armed.

PICARD
I'm aware of that. It's a chance I'm willing to take.

(CONTINUED)

198 CONTINUED: 198

Kirk nods, satisfied. In the clearing below, Soran brushes off his pants and then begins to moves toward the scaffolding.

KIRK
Good plan... with one exception.

PICARD
What?

KIRK
I'll take care of Soran.

Before Picard can respond, Kirk LEAPS down off the scaffolding and takes Soran by surprise.

PICARD
Merde.

Picard has no choice -- he JUMPS down off the scaffolding and heads for the launcher.

The following happens very quickly:

-- Kirk FIGHTS with Soran, hand-to-hand, brutal.

-- Picard reaches the launcher, works the control panel, trying to shut it down. It won't respond. On the screen we see the alien countdown graphics continuing to race by...

-- In the sky, the distant Energy Ribbon can be seen getting closer...

-- Soran tries to pull his disruptor, but Kirk knocks it to the ground. There's a struggle for the weapon...

-- Picard looks helplessly at the control panel. Nothing he does has any effect. He keeps hitting buttons... looking for other control panels, anything to affect the launcher. Suddenly, he touches one particular control and the screen CHANGES to an image of the Veridian SUN, held in the center of an alien CROSS-HAIR.

-- Picard begins working the control panel... desperate... he looks at the screen... and the cross-hairs start to shift slightly... Picard works faster...

-- Kirk punches Soran and sends him flying backward. He lands near the disruptor, picks it up and FIRES at point blank range. The blast catches Kirk squarely in the chest, knocking him off his feet.

(CONTINUED)

198 CONTINUED: (2) 198

He falls to the ground, motionless.

-- Soran gets up, whirls around, points the weapon at Picard.

199 MOUNTAIN TOP - WIDE 199

The probe is suddenly LAUNCHED in a roar of flame. Soran freezes. His eyes follow the probe as it arcs into the sky. The two men watch the probe as it heads toward the sun...

The probe makes a sweeping turn to the right and arcs back down toward the planet. Soran watches in horror as the probe crashes harmlessly into the distant jungle. We hear a muffled explosion.

Soran can't believe his dreams have been shattered. He looks into the sky and sees the distant Ribbon streaking overhead. The disruptor falls from his hand as he rushes to the top of the scaffolding.

200 PICARD 200

moves to Kirk, checks his pulse. The Captain's eyes flutter -- he's still holding on, but he's badly wounded.

201 SORAN 201

is standing on the rock ledge in front of the "X". He reaches up toward the sky as if trying to grab the Ribbon with his bare hands... but the Ribbon passes by and disappears.

SORAN
No...

His look of shock turns to fury and madness. He turns to Picard.

SORAN
(continuing)
YOU!!

He jumps down a few levels and then DIVES off the scaffolding at Picard. But Picard is quicker. He GRABS the disruptor and FIRES -- the BLAST CATCHES SORAN IN MID-AIR.

(CONTINUED)

201 CONTINUED: 201

Soran drops to the ground a short distance away. Dead. The pocket watch has been shattered.

202 PICARD 202

turns back to Kirk, cradles the dying man's head in his lap. Kirk's eyes flick open, and he takes a ragged breath.

KIRK
Nice shot.

Kirk coughs. His eyes flutter, he's fading fast.

PICARD
I'll find a way to contact the Enterprise. You're going to be all right.

KIRK
Did we do it? Did we stop the probe?

PICARD
Yes. You gave me the time I needed.

KIRK
Least I could do... for a Captain of the Enterprise.

Kirk coughs again.

PICARD
Try to hang on.

Kirk looks up at the sky... the sunlight is warm on his face. A quiet moment... then, with a last smile on his face.

KIRK
It was fun.

Kirk dies.

Hold the scene for a long moment, the two men in the quiet jungle clearing.

DISSOLVE TO:

203 EXT. MOUNTAINTOP - SUNSET 203

204 CLOSE ON PICARD'S HAND 204

as he places a stone on a large pile of other stones. MOVE TO REVEAL that Picard is placing the final few rocks on Kirk's grave.

He reaches into a pocket and pulls out Kirk's command insignia pin. He carefully places it on the grave... and stands there silently for a few moments.

A distant WHINE of engines can be heard. Picard looks up into the sky...

205 PICARD'S POV 205

The Enterprise Shuttlecraft is flying through the sky toward the mountaintop.

206 EXT. JUNGLE - ANOTHER CLEARING - SUNSET 206

The shuttle has just landed, and the door OPENS as Picard enters the clearing. Worf jumps out to meet him.

WORF
Captain, are you all right?

PICARD
Yes.

WORF
What about Doctor Soran?

PICARD
You needn't worry about the Doctor anymore.

Picard EXITS to the shuttle.

207 INT. SHUTTLECRAFT - CONTINUOUS 207

Picard enters and then stops in surprise as he sees:

-- A GROUP OF CHILDREN sitting on the floor of the shuttle, looking at him.

-- Lursa and B'Etor sitting uncomfortably among the children.

(CONTINUED)

207 CONTINUED: 207

-- Data sitting at the pilot controls. He turns toward Picard, and we reveal that he has been almost completely DISASSEMBLED and INTEGRATED into the console itself. No legs, one arm, half his face missing.

DATA
Welcome back, Captain.

Picard looks to Worf.

WORF
It will take some time to explain.

Off Picard's bemused expression...

CUT TO:

208 EXT. PLANET SURFACE - THE ENTERPRISE (WIDE SHOT) 208

as seen before.

PICARD (V.O.)
Captain's Log, Stardate 48650.1. The Starship Farragut has arrived in orbit, and has begun to beam up the Enterprise survivors for transport back to Earth.

209 EXT. ENTERPRISE HULL/JUNGLE - DAY 209

The hatch leading into the jungle, as seen before. A small Transporter pad has been set-up nearby. Three injured N.D. Crewmembers (slings, torn clothing, etc.) DEMATERIALIZE. Troi checks a PADD, nods to Beverly.

BEVERLY
(taps combadge)
Crusher to Farragut. That's the last of the wounded.

Data and Geordi walk out of the hatch and into the clearing. Data has been completely reassembled; he is holding his cat, Spot.

BEVERLY
Data, you look good as new.

DATA
Thank you, Doctor. Geordi did an excellent job of reassembly.

(CONTINUED)

209 CONTINUED: 209

GEORDI
Thank you.

TROI
How do you feel?

Data looks a little nervous... he keeps glancing back at the hatch over his shoulder.

DATA
I am well, Counselor. However... I do feel somewhat... anxious.

TROI
It's perfectly natural to feel a sense of tension after the kind of --

DATA
(cutting her off)
If you will excuse me.

Data quickly walks off toward the Transporter pad. A beat, and then B'Etor ENTERS from the hatch. She looks around eagerly.

B'ETOR
Where's the android?

Troi and the others exchange a glance... they suddenly understand Data's hasty exit... they shrug and shake their heads at B'Etor.

CUT TO:

210 INT. READY ROOM - DAY 210

Picard, in a fresh uniform, looks around the wreckage of his Ready Room. He moves to a pile of broken glass and furniture, and carefully removes his beloved book of Shakespeare. He brushes off the dirt and glass... and tucks it under his arm. He EXITS...

211 INT. BRIDGE - CONTINUOUS 211

Riker is there waiting for the Captain.

RIKER
Everyone's aboard the Farragut... except us.

(CONTINUED)

211 CONTINUED: 211

PICARD
(with a smile)
If you don't mind, Wil... the Captain is traditionally the last one to leave the ship.

RIKER
Not at all.

Riker looks around the Bridge.

RIKER
I'm going to miss her. She went before her time.

Picard has been rejuvenated by his experience.

PICARD
It's not how many years you've lived, Number One... but how you've lived them. And I think the Enterprise lived a good life.

RIKER
No argument there.

PICARD
Besides, I doubt this will be the last ship to carry the name Enterprise.

Riker smiles.

RIKER
See you in orbit, Captain.
(taps combadge)
Riker to Farragut. Energize.

Riker DEMATERIALIZES. Picard takes a last, quiet stroll around the Bridge of his ship. He sits in his chair one last time, opens his book of Shakespeare... reads a passage from "Hamlet" quietly to himself.

PICARD
(reading)
"He was a man, take him for all in all... I shall not look upon his like again."

He takes a beat... then closes the book with a snap and taps his combadge.

PICARD
One to beam up.

(CONTINUED)

211 CONTINUED: (2) 211

Picard DEMATERIALIZES.

FADE TO BLACK.

ROLL CREDITS

THE END